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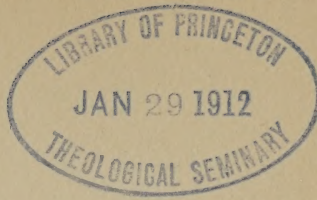










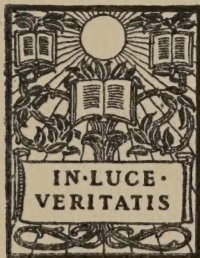


# The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ

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## PREFACE.

THE Addresses which are reproduced with some expansions in this little book, were intended to give to those unacquainted with the details of historical study some insight into the results of modern investigation in the Gospel-field, and some knowledge of the process by which the ecclesiastical conception of the person of Jesus Christ was slowly formed. In such brief surveys much was necessarily left unsaid, and the relation of Jesus to our religious experience did not fall within the lecturer's scope.

If any reader should desire a fuller view of Jesus and his teaching as presented in the earliest records, he will find the *Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* by Mr. C. G. Montefiore of great service : while from the philosophical side a lofty and penetrating estimate is contained in the *Problems of Human Life* by Prof. Rudolf Eucken.

My sincerest thanks are due to the Rev. J. Edwin Odgers, D.D., for his kindness in reading through the proofs, and giving me the advantage of his wide and varied knowledge.

J. E. C.

Oxford, May 24, 1911.





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## THE HISTORICAL JESUS

CHRISTIANITY, as we receive it through the New Testament, is a historical religion. It professes to be derived from a particular person. Whatever else he may be in the eternal counsels of God according to the definitions of the creeds of the Church, Jesus of Nazareth belongs to a particular country; he sprang from a particular people; he belonged to a particular age; and the circumstances of his life, his spoken word, the events of his career from birth to death, can be known to us only through testimony. And whatever he may appear now to the experience of the believer, whether in the mystical communion of the Eucharist, or in the Evangelical experiences of forgiveness and justification, what he was on earth we can apprehend only by evidence. That evidence is summed up for us in the Gospels; they



have generated a gigantic literature for their explanation ; but it is not too much to say that only within the last fifty years, in this country, has their reasoned study been established.

(i)

It is just over half a century since Benjamin Jowett, then Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford, laid down the famous principle in *Essays and Reviews* (1860) that the New Testament must be interpreted like any other book. The saying appears simple, but it has far-reaching applications. For if we are to study the Gospels to reconstruct the life and teaching of Jesus as we study the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon and the Dialogues of Plato to understand Socrates, or the Scriptures of the *Three Baskets* to realize the person and work of Gotama the Buddha,—we at once take the records out of the control of the Church. We no longer apply to them the standards of a long dogmatic development. We cease to read them with the pre-suppositions supplied by later theological decrees, or to expound them on the basis of formulæ devised hundreds of years later in a totally

different intellectual and moral atmosphere. We bring them into the field of history, and test them by the methods of scientific investigation.

Not without significance was it that the publication of *Essays and Reviews* followed in a few months after Darwin had issued the *Origin of Species*. That book, as all the world knows, opened a new era in many departments of enquiry. It gave to the conception of evolution, which had haunted so many minds, a clear and definite expression. What was the bearing of this conception when it was transferred from the field of organic life to that of history? Among other results it established a definite relation between great personalities and their age. However much they may transcend their environment of contemporary thought or practice, they are reared in it, they must speak its language, they start with its ideas, they react upon its religious beliefs and its moral standards. The message of Jesus took one form because he was born a Jew and not a Greek; it has another because he was bred in Nazareth and not in Alexandria. The study of the life of Jesus—stimulated by the works of Continental scholars (Renan, Strauss, and Keim, to name but three

of the most important)—was consequently pursued upon fresh lines. A vast amount of energy was devoted to the reconstruction of the scene and the age in which he had lived. In connexion with the historical investigation of the Old Testament the country was mapped; sites were explored; places were identified, monuments examined, and inscriptions collected. The histories of Josephus and the prodigious accumulations of Talmudic lore were searched for whatever could illustrate the Gospel story. The institutions of government, the trades and industries of the people, their schools and teachers, their parties and sects, were all investigated in the light of contemporary record or later tradition. The ceremonial of Temple and feast, the simple Sabbath meeting in the Synagogue, the ritual of public worship and the prayers of private devotion, disclosed the fundamental conceptions of national and personal piety. Moreover, a whole series of works came into view, extending from the book of Daniel in the middle of the second century B.C. to the age immediately following the great catastrophe which involved the overthrow of the Jewish State when Jerusalem fell in the year 70 A.D.



Under ancient names like Enoch, the Twelve Patriarchs, Moses, Solomon, Baruch and others (the fourth book of Ezra, or II Esdras, will be found in our Apocrypha), the hope of deliverance from foreign rule, of resurrection and judgment and an age of blessedness in the kingdom of God, found passionate expression ; and the study of the apocalyptic literature in the age preceding and following the lifetime of Jesus has thrown a flood of light upon much of the language of the Gospels and the faith of the early Church. The enquiry into the relations of the earliest narratives of Jesus' career, and the sources which their authors employed, has shown that these documents, like other records of the personages of antiquity, contain elements of various worth, and cannot be regarded as in the strict sense historical. In particular it is clear that while many resemblances unite the First Three Gospels, the Fourth is marked off from its predecessors by wide divergences in the sequence of the events of Jesus' ministry and in the nature of his teaching. Lastly, among the influences which have contributed to the truer comprehension of the Gospels we must include the rise into view of other historic

religions, some of them covering mighty empires, embracing hundreds of millions of believers, founded on scriptures more ancient than our New Testament, and begetting rites and institutions no less enduring than those of Christianity itself. The modern student may cast his glance over a whole continent; the scriptures of India and Persia, the cults of Egypt and Syria, the philosophies of Greece, and—more ancient still—the mythology of Babylonia, may all throw some light upon the figure who is still central in the history of religion.

A vast mass of new materials has thus become available for the student of the Gospel story. It is frankly recognized that the New Testament contains elements from various sources. A great imaginative seer like the author of the Apocalypse constructs his marvellous pictures with symbols of many kinds. We may not always divine his secrets; the origins of the traditional emblems which he employs may have been often hid from his own eyes. They have been combined and recombined in various successive forms, and have behind them an immense antiquity. There are scenes in the Gospels which seem no less mythical.

There is a grotto at Nazareth where a silver star shines in the marble floor. It is encircled by an inscription, also in silver letters, *Hic Verbum caro factum est*, 'on this spot the Word was made flesh.' Here Roman Catholic tradition locates the miracle of the Incarnation. But this is not history. From the miraculous conception of Jesus to his ascension into the sky, his life appears to be enveloped in a radiant haze of myth. We are necessarily ignorant of many things. We do not know within a margin of some years the dates of his birth or death. The length of his public career cannot be determined with any certainty. All the particulars of a biography in the modern sense are wanting. But we may have the same kind of assurance that Jesus taught in Galilee, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, as that Augustus was emperor of Rome, or that Socrates died in Athens after drinking the hemlock.

But the historian finds himself challenged from two sides. On the one hand he is plumply told that no such person ever existed: the events of his career show that he is only a humanized deity, provided (no one knows how) with a local base in Galilee, and credited with a mass of teaching

such as formed the common store of a Jewish rabbi. And on the other hand we are assured that Jesus of Nazareth was no other than the Second Person of the Trinity incarnate in a human being, so that he was at the same time 'very God and very Man.' Here is an immense range of possibilities. Their full discussion would require a volume. They involve the most complicated and intricate problems: in the brief limits of four lectures it is only practicable to state in the briefest way some present-day solutions.

(ii)

More than two generations ago David Frederick Strauss in his famous *Life of Jesus* (1835) applied to many of the Gospel stories the mythological key which converted them from records of fact into symbols of ideas. It was an effective weapon against the crude rationalism of the first part of the last century. Nearly thirty years later (1864) he retold the tale in somewhat different fashion, with more strenuous emphasis upon the Teacher's words. But the lines of enquiry which he had been the first to open, led Bruno Bauer, after a long series of studies, to present the figure of Jesus



(1878) as an ideal blended of Jewish, Greek, and Roman elements. In our own country, during the last decade, Mr. J. M. Robertson poured the results of his wide reading into two volumes designed to show that various elements from different oriental cults had been fused together around an imaginary personality; while in Germany the brave voice of Pastor Kalthoff at Bremen was heard pleading that Jesus and his gospel were the symbolic embodiment of new social aspirations begotten out of the economic distresses of the Roman Empire. In America Prof. W. B. Smith, of Tulane University, New Orleans, sought to prove the existence of a widespread pre-Christian cult of a divine Jesus, and his arguments have been recently reproduced and expanded by Prof. Drews, of Carlsruhe, whose book *The Christ-Myth* has recently aroused an animated discussion. But before dealing with these arguments a few words must be said concerning an attack from another quarter on a very different line.

Five years ago Prof. Jensen, of Marburg, one of the foremost Assyriologists of Germany, published the first volume of an immense treatise (it contained more than a thousand pages) on a

famous poem of Babylonian antiquity known as the Gilgamesh Epic. It is believed to have been in existence at least two thousand years before our era. The hero, Gilgamesh, was king of Erech in South Babylonia, and the poem dealt with his adventures and those of his friend Eabani. Some tablets of the poem are lost, and there are gaps in the story ; but the famous narrative of the Deluge, discovered by Mr. George Smith in 1872, belonged to the series. In the view of Prof. Jensen this poem has been the parent of innumerable tales, running through wide ramifications of literature. Story after story in many lands, east, west, north, and south, betrays its influence. The personalities of the Old Testament are again and again built up on this ancient pair. In patriarch and king, in Moses and Aaron, in Elijah and Elisha, the forms of Gilgamesh and Eabani live again ; and the same origin is proclaimed for the supposed founders of the Christian Church. Unable to secure the attention of the theologian, Prof. Jensen has appealed to the laity in a pamphlet entitled 'Moses, Jesus, Paul, Three Variants of the Babylonian God-man Gilgamesh' (1909). Without any inquiry into the literary

origins of the Gospels, or the authenticity of the letters of Paul, the documents of the New Testament are flung away as inconsistent with the theory. The Evangelic traditions describe a being who never really lived: the apostolic correspondence is a mass of forgeries; the narratives in Acts have no historical foundation. On what grounds are these large assertions based? The answer is presented in the much vaunted method of parallels. In page after page and column after column the incidents of the Gospel story are placed over against those of the Babylonian saga. Likenesses no doubt there are, and common incidents in legend and folk-tale all round the globe. Details in the careers of Moses and Elijah may well have influenced the presentation of Jesus. But who will believe the simple sequences of the Galilean lake to have originated out of the following parallels collected by Prof. Jensen (p. 28)?

Eabani returns from the wilderness to his dwelling, the home of Gilgamesh. . . .

Jesus returns from the wilderness to his home. . . .

A plague of fever, Xisuthros intercedes for suffering humanity, by which probably the plague is stopped.

The mother-in-law of Peter is sick of a fever and Jesus heals her.

Xisuthros builds himself a ship and keeps it ready.

A boat is kept ready for Jesus.

Xisuthros with his family and his immediate friends enters the ship one evening.

Jesus and his disciples enter the boat one evening.

A storm arises and falls.

A storm arises and falls.

Xisuthros lands with his family far from his dwelling.

Jesus lands in Peræa, the other side of the lake from his home.

Sinful humanity and most of the animals, including the swine, are drowned in the flood.

Two thousand demons or more, and two thousand swine are drowned in the lake over which Jesus sailed.

Such parallels, it is plain, have no value whatever. Prof. Jensen makes no attempt to establish any kind of connexion through literary history. The tale of Noah follows the Mesopotamian version of the flood in one incident after another, so that its dependence cannot be questioned. But between the Deluge as a world-judgment, sweeping away a sinful race, and a storm on the Lake of Galilee, there is not a particle of resemblance. Moreover, the destruction of the Gadarene swine is in no way connected with the rise of the wind and the danger of the boat; there is no parallel between the legion of demons and the multitude



of human kind, and the specification of the swine among the animals that perished as the source of the miracle ascribed to Jesus is grotesque in the extreme. The series abruptly ends before the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. To the scenes of the last days the Gilgamesh story offers not the faintest resemblance. There remain, however, a few trifles like the Sermon on the Mount. Some one, Prof. Jensen admits, must have said the things set down to Jesus. Let us agree that it was not anyone who was miraculously born or mysteriously transfigured. Such a Jesus doubtless never lived. But the student learns to distinguish between history and myth.

From a totally different point of view does Prof. Drews attempt to demonstrate a similar thesis.<sup>1</sup> He writes avowedly in the name of spiritual religion, and advocates a lofty mode of idealistic monism. He finds Christian theology blocking his way, and he seeks therefore to clear the path by demonstrating that its central figure has no

<sup>1</sup> *The Christ Myth*, translated by C. Delisle Burns, M.A., London (1910). For a more extended criticism of this work the reader may be referred to a 'reply' by Mr. Herbert J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., *Did Jesus really live?* London, 1911.

place in history. In one sense, indeed, he proposes to interpret and develop the Christian conception of redemption. He conceives the world's activity as God's activity. He presents the drama of history filled with pain and struggle as the long Passion of Deity. In each human soul God fights, suffers, conquers, and dies, that he may triumph over limitation and evil. In thus universalizing the conflict which the Church has seen impersonated in Christ, the author claims to preserve historical continuity no less than the liberal Christian who discards from the Gospels what does not suit the twentieth century, and only keeps what modern thought does not compel him to reject.

The ministry of Jesus is described in our four Gospels under the presupposition that he was the Christ or Messiah. It might have been expected that our critic would have analysed this conception in detail, and would have examined the various forms which it had assumed in the literature of elder prophecy or later apocalypse. There is much to be said on this theme, and investigation has recently been busy with the literature in which the mysterious form of the Son of Man appears seated on a heavenly throne beside the Ancient

of Days.<sup>1</sup> Here is, truly, the beginning of a ‘ Christ-myth ’ proper ; and Prof. Drews has no difficulty in connecting the group of ideas which gathers round this central figure with the conceptions of resurrection and judgment which belonged to the great scheme for the close of the long conflict between Ahura Mazda (the ‘ Lord omniscient ’) and the Spirit of Evil (Añramainyu) in the theology of Persia. But we learn afterwards with astonishment that both the Persian expectation of a deliverer (Saoshyant) and the Jewish doctrine of a Messiah ‘ rest upon a prophecy according to which Vishnu Jesudu (!)<sup>2</sup> was to be born a Brahmin in the city of Skambelam ’ (p. 107). There is no such prophecy. Jesudu is unknown to Sanskrit. If by the ‘ ancient sacred poem, the Bharta Chastram,’ which Prof. Drews vaguely cites as his authority, he means the great epic known as the Mahābhārata,<sup>3</sup> the late prophecy that Vishnu will become incarnate in a Brahmin

<sup>1</sup> The English reader will find a valuable article in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, Oct., 1910, by Dr. W. V. Hague.

<sup>2</sup> This note of admiration is Prof. Drews’s own.

<sup>3</sup> *Chastram* sounds like a French rendering of the Sanskrit *shastra*.

family is, of course, no antecedent either of the eschatology of the Zend Avesta or of Hebrew Messianic hope. Misstatements such as these compel the student to test every assertion with care; and when the argument passes from the conception of Christ to the person of Jesus, the result does not inspire confidence in the writer's accuracy.

His main thesis is cognate with that of Mr. J. M. Robertson in his volumes on *Christianity and Mythology* (1900) and *Pagan Christs* (1903), supplemented by the investigations of Prof. W. B. Smith under the title *Der Vorchristliche Jesus* (1906). Prior to the Gospel story or the work of the Apostle Paul, it is alleged, there existed a widespread cult of Jesus as a deity in Jewish sects. The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua<sup>1</sup>; and its application to a deity is carried back to the successor of Moses, interpreted as an ancient Ephraimitic god of the sun and fruitfulness. But even supposing Joshua to be a mythical figure, no proof is offered of any worship founded

<sup>1</sup> The reader need hardly be reminded that it is of common occurrence; it is reckoned that the historian Josephus mentions twenty different persons so called.



on his name in subsequent periods of Israel's history. The High Priest Joshua to whom Zechariah (in our present text vi. 12<sup>1</sup>) assigns the function of rebuilding the Temple, is indeed called ‘ the Branch,’ by which Jeremiah (xxiii. 5) had designated a prince of the Davidic house, but this supplies no basis for a secret cult. What then of the Jessaioi and the Nazoraioi (Nazarenes) described by Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus (died 403 A.D.)? The good father was apt to be confused, and Prof. Drews adds to his confusion. Epiphanius certainly states that the Nazoraioi were called Jessaioi before they were called Christians at Antioch, and he fancifully derives their designation from Jesse or Jesus (the reader will hardly need to be reminded that in Hebrew Yishai and Yehoshua were quite different names). Such an etymology supplies no proof that either Jesse or Jesus was a cult-god. Moreover, Epiphanius's younger contemporary Nilus (died 430) gives a very different account. According to him the Jessaioi were not Christians at all, but a kind of posterity of Jonadab, living in tents,

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Drews rightly points out that the passage originally included the name of Zerubbabel (p. 58).

abstaining from wine and other luxuries like the Rechabites of old, early exemplars of the simple life. Without noticing this conflict of testimony, however, Prof. Drews advances one step further, and affirms that the Nazarenes 'were, as Epiphanius shows, in existence long before Christ, and had no knowledge of him' (p. 59). The statement is founded on a misunderstanding. Epiphanius distinguishes between the Christian *Nazoraioi* and a Jewish sect named *Nasaraioi*, who lived east of the Jordan, practised circumcision, observed Sabbaths and feasts, but rejected animal food and sacrifices, and declared the Pentateuch a forgery. These *Nasaraioi*, says Epiphanius, were older than Christ. The alleged proof from the Nazarenes falls to pieces.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, of the phrase 'the things concerning Jesus'? Have we not in this, argues Prof. Smith, indisputable evidence of an earlier faith? 'According to all appearance,' we are assured, the expression 'has no reference to the history of Jesus'; it 'only means the doctrines concern-

<sup>1</sup> Space is lacking here to investigate the confused statements of Epiphanius; it is only necessary to deal with those of Prof. Drews as his interpreter.

ing him.’ It involves, therefore, ‘ a pre-Christian form of belief in a Jesus ’ (pp. 62-63). If so it is certainly curious that it should first occur in the story of the woman with an issue of blood, who, ‘ having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind and touched his garment ’ (*Mark* v. 27). In the second instance Luke attributes it to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, who related to their unknown companion ‘ the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people ’ (*Luke* xxiv. 19). Paul, in the same writer’s phrase, taught at Rome ‘ the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ ’ (*Acts* xxviii. 31). These may certainly, in the apostle’s mouth, have included much beside a recital of traditions ; but there is no reason for refusing to this passage the meaning which the words obviously bear in those just cited. One more instance, however, must be quoted. Did not the learned and zealous Apollos, knowing only the baptism of John, speak boldly in the synagogue at Ephesus and teach ‘ the things concerning Jesus ’ (*Acts* xviii. 25) ? This Jesus, it is affirmed, could be no successor of John, no prophet and Messiah crucified and risen,

or Apollos would have already received Christian initiation; he must have been the centre of a secret doctrine cherished among Jews and Hellenists for more than a hundred years! That is a large inference to draw from slender data. There is no proof that Christian preaching was always accompanied by baptism. The apostle Paul declared that Christ had sent him not to baptize but to preach the Gospel (I *Cor.* i. 17). 'The things concerning Jesus,' accordingly, might have been imparted to new believers and carried by them into fresh circles without any rite of baptism. This was not necessarily at the outset conferred upon every one. The disciples of the Baptist were evidently spread over a wider area than the Gospel traditions have occasion to describe; and some twelve of them at Ephesus were apparently associated with the Christian brethren (*Acts* xix. 1-3) without having received anything more than John's baptism of repentance. Paul proceeded to baptize them into the name of the Lord Jesus, but we do not read that Aquila or the brethren at Ephesus had found it necessary to baptize Apollos before sending him on with commendatory letters to Corinth (xviii. 26, 27). The plea for a secret Jesus-cult seems to lack proof.



Undeterred, however, by the scantiness of his evidence, Prof. Drews believes himself able to account for the whole story of the death of Jesus—no attempt is made to explain the incidents of his public ministry—out of the conception of the dying God, which belonged to various cults in Western Asia. This is traced back to the worship of the fire-god Agni (Latin *ignis*) in the ancient Aryan hymns of the Rig Veda, and we are told that ‘ *Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God, as Christ is very frequently called, is in fact nothing else than *Agni Deus*, since Agnus stands in a certain measure as the Latin translation for Agni ’ (p. 145, cp. p. 161). Every school-boy knows that such an equation is impossible. The confidence with which Prof. Drews makes unsupported assertions may easily beguile those who have not the means at hand of testing his statements, and one instance must suffice to put readers on their guard. The details of the Passion, we are assured, are certainly unhistorical: ‘ the derision,<sup>1</sup> the flagellation, both the thieves, the crying out on the cross, the sponge with vinegar (*Ps.* lxi. 21), the piercing with a lance,<sup>2</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* l. 6 sq.

<sup>2</sup> *Zech.* xii. 10.

soldiers casting dice for the dead man's garments, also the women at the place of execution and at the grave, the grave in a rock, are to be found in just the same form in the worship of Adonis, Attis, Mithras, and Osiris' (p. 241). What does antiquity say about these deities ?

According to one account Adonis was slain by a wild boar, sent against him by jealous Ares. According to another, he perished through Artemis, goddess of the chase. According to a third, Apollo transformed himself into a boar and killed him.

Attis owed his death in one story to the anger of the king of Phrygia whose daughter Kybelê he had betrayed. A variant of the Adonis tale ascribed his death also to a wild boar, sent to destroy him by Zeus, who was jealous of the honour paid to him by the Lydians. The Christian writer Arnobius relates a brutal legend from an unknown mythologist, Timotheus, in which Attis unmans himself in frenzy, and dies beneath a pine tree.

Mithras does not appear to have died at all. The brilliant scholar who has thrown so much light upon his mysteries, Prof. Franz Cumont, describes

him, when his earthly labours are completed, as celebrating their close at a final meal with Helios and the other companions of his toil. Then he is borne by the Sun in his shining car across the ocean to the heavenly height, and ascends to the sky without passing through the gates of death.

The ancient Egyptian texts have much to say about the resurrection of Osiris, but the story of the mode in which he was done to death is known only in a late Greek form. It is Plutarch (if he be the author of the treatise on Isis and Osiris) who relates the well-known tale that his brother Typhon induced him in sport to enter a splendid chest made exactly to fit his person, shut down the lid with the help of his confederates, and sent it forth by one of the arms of the Nile into the sea.

The statement that the details of the Christian narrative are all to be found in one or other of these mythologic groups, suggests the following questions :—

Which of the four deities was mocked ?

Which was scourged ?

Which suffered between two thieves ?

Which uttered a dying cry ?

To which was a sponge offered with vinegar ?

Which was pierced with a lance after death ?  
For whose garments did the soldiers cast dice ?  
At whose execution were women present ?  
Which was buried in a rock ?

Until these questions can be answered, the summary in the Creed, 'Crucified under Pontius Pilate,' supported as it is by the historian Tacitus, who was a boy in the cruel days of Nero, may be allowed to stand.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning another element in the Gospels Prof. Drews is silent, the preaching of the kingdom of God. The conception of a suffering, dying, and rising God which he desires to disengage as the type of universal Christian experience, belongs to a different order of ideas from that of the approaching catastrophe, the end of the world-age, the advent of the Son of Man from the sky, the resurrection and the judgment. In this respect great importance attaches to the testimony of the Apostle Paul. He wrote to the Galatians

<sup>1</sup> This does not of course imply that all the Gospel details are of equal historic worth. Prof. Drews' own references point at least to a possible source for some of them. The evidence of Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 44), has of course to be discredited as an interpolation. But no serious historian supports that treatment.

that on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion he stayed a fortnight with Peter, and saw James, the Lord’s brother.<sup>1</sup> This statement is conclusive as to the historical reality of Jesus, unless it can be set aside. Prof. Drews suggests three modes of weakening its force.

(1) The term ‘ brother ’ may have been employed in the sense of ‘ follower,’ without implying any family relationship. Doubtless the term of intimate affection was used to characterize the members of the Christian fellowship who were ‘ brethren one of another.’ But there is no trace of this usage in connexion with Jesus himself. Peter and John, who, with James, were reputed to be ‘ pillars,’ nowhere bear the name of the Lord’s brothers.

(2) The passage may be an interpolation. Of this there is not a particle of evidence. No known manuscript, no version, no patristic quotation, suggests any disturbance of the text.

(3) But perhaps the whole group of Pauline letters belongs to the second century. Prof. Drews does not offer any proof, and it is difficult to meet the vague allegations sometimes made

<sup>1</sup> Mentioned in *Mark* vi. 3, *Matt.* xiii. 55.



on behalf of this view, such as that the atmosphere of the letters is that of a later day. Two themes, however, which again and again appear in these documents, seem specifically to belong to the early history of the Church. The admission of the Gentiles without subjection to the Jewish law, which is argued so passionately in the letter to the Galatians, was soon settled, as the Fourth Gospel shows, in favour of the principle of liberty. Before the second century set in, the controversy had disappeared. And the expectation of the speedy advent of 'the Lord' which occupies so prominent a place in the Apostle's hope, is altogether unsuited to a time when the Church was accommodating itself to the existing scene, and preparing for the responsibilities of continued existence in this world. The eschatology of I *Thessalonians* iv. 15-17 would be entirely out of keeping in the second century. It may be difficult to harmonize the description of the descent of Jesus from the sky with a shout—the archangel's summons, the trumpet-blast—and the mystical life of the Christ who is formed within, the hidden spirit, given in baptism and carrying with it the germ of a new creation. But it appears

impossible to eliminate the personal elements from the Apostle's thought. 'Man's Saviour,' we are told, 'is not historical, as St. Paul is never tired of reiterating.'<sup>1</sup> But he calls him Jesus, though he does not add 'of Nazareth.' He assures the Thessalonians that he will deliver them from the coming wrath, and the Philippians that he will transform their earthly bodies to resemble his glorious body, just as he tells the Galatians that he had met his brother in Jerusalem! The repeated references to the cross and the *parousia*, the details of the advent—'we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump'—all imply definite external events, in which a known historic person is to hold the great assize, 'in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ' (*Rom.* ii. 16).

To treat Christ, therefore, as simply Paul's 'name for the consciousness of the Divine within him' is to ignore one very important aspect of the Apostle's message. It was the impassioned anticipation of Christ's speedy return—even from

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Anderson, in the *Hibbert Journal*, Jan., 1911, p. 350.

his Roman prison Paul still writes 'The Lord is at hand' (*Phil.* iv. 5)—which supplied the motive-power of his preaching, and hurried him from land to land. The submission of such a being to a shameful death which could not be inflicted on himself as a Roman citizen, was an actual incident which filled him with awe and love. It is the same with our Synoptic narratives. They are something more than pictorial illustrations of the growth of the soul. There can be no doubt that the Evangelists believed themselves to be describing the life of an actual person. The descent of the Spirit into Jesus at the Baptism was unquestionably for Mark a literal event, just as the wondrous birth was for Matthew. Stories no doubt there are which we interpret as symbols; the Temptation, the multiplication of the loaves, the walking on the water, the withering of the fig-tree. No distinction was drawn at that time between historic accuracy and devout edification. Each Evangelist has his own point of view, selects his materials, and disposes his traditions, to produce a specific religious effect. It may be granted that the earliest narratives were not shaped until Paul's letters had

been written. But there is no trace in these books that the writers supposed themselves to be depicting internal experiences instead of outward facts. They are concerned with a real being though they may relate of him unreal events. Unlike the Fourth Evangelist they hint at no differences between 'earthly' and 'heavenly' things. They are planted firmly on a particular scene, and engaged with a special type of religious and social life. What have 'publicans and sinners' to do with the 'finding of the Universal Self'? Sever the symbol from history, and a few refined minds may cherish it in their chambers of imagery, but for the majority its power will be gone; it will no longer present a human experience in a universally intelligible form; men will cast it out like salt which has lost its savour, and it will be trodden in the mire under their feet.

(iii)

We turn then to the Gospels and ask for their testimony. The differences between the First Three and the Fourth no longer need reiterated display. Whatever historical data may lie embedded in the latter, it rests upon the former even

while it may (as some think) correct them ; and the witness to the reality of the person must be sought in the earlier rather than the latest works. By almost universal consent—an agreement reached by various methods of investigation and from very different theological and ecclesiastical pre-suppositions—*Mark* presents the oldest view of the public career of Jesus. It was employed, whether in its existing form or in an earlier edition, by the other Evangelists who are known to us under the names Matthew and Luke. The tradition of the Church supposed it to embody the recollections of Peter, reduced after his death into consecutive story by his interpreter Mark, probably at Rome. It doubtless also contains various elements which cannot be ascribed to the reminiscences of an eye-witness ; and the long discourse on the last things in *Mark* xiii. bears traces of dependence on some document, probably of Jewish or Jewish-Christian origin. But various considerations lead to the belief that it acquired substantially its present contents and character soon after the great catastrophe of the overthrow of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the Table in *The Bible in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 340.



In the composition of the other Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke* a second document would seem to have been employed besides the Marcan narrative, for they contain a quantity of significant teaching in common, which seems best explained by assuming the use of a collection of the sayings of Jesus, such as may have existed in more than one form in different Christian circles. The scope of this collection is indeed variously conceived; but modern students are coming more and more to the conclusion that it was made before the earliest of our First Three Gospels was written, and was probably used (whether directly or in reminiscence) by the author of our *Mark*. *Matthew* and *Luke* followed—in what order it is not possible to decide with certainty—and both were probably written before the first century ran out, though *Matthew* may have received some additions at an even later date.

These books are naturally the product of their age. The writers share the culture of their time; they gather up traditions from varying sources; and they look out upon a world very different from ours. Over it rises a vast pile of seven heavens above the sky. Contemporary literature

describes their occupants. There in their several orders dwelt the principalities and powers, the thrones and lordships, which loomed before the imagination of the Apostle Paul. There in the third heaven lay the paradise into which he believed himself to have been caught up, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell. Thence, too, heavenly messengers might descend to earth, like Gabriel, one of the four great Angels of the Presence from the topmost height. And thither might the risen Messiah be conveyed through the air, till, wrapped in cloud, he disappeared from sight.

Not even the powers of the upper worlds, however, were all good : and the sovereignty of God was invaded by that of the Opposer, the Sâtân. Over against the Father stood the Adversary, who challenged his power and limited his sway. From the abyss came the demons which swarmed upon the earth. It was their malign power which produced disease ; the blind and deaf, the epileptic and insane, were under their control ; and it would be the function of the Messiah to reduce them to impotence and subjugate their lord. The Gospels themselves tell us, however,

that Jesus was not alone in the ability to master them. When the malicious charge was brought against him that he cast out demons by the help of Beelzebub, prince of the demons, 'Then by whom,' he asked, 'do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.' The student, however, now knows that these conceptions are thousands of years old, and are spread at the present day all round the world. They underlie the ancient magical books of Egypt and Babylonia; they may be followed in Christian history all through mediæval Europe; while the testimony of innumerable travellers proves that they may be traced from continent to continent and island to island in every phase of the lower culture. In view of the modern science of anthropology the plea once pathetically raised on behalf of the Gospel narratives that there was a special creation of demons in the age of Jesus and his apostles, falls to the ground as absurd.

Into a scene thus constituted the Gospel of *Mark* introduces Jesus, whose title Christ or Messiah has already become a kind of proper name.<sup>1</sup> Its history and significance will be expounded later.

<sup>1</sup> *Mark* i. 1, 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.'

It is the centre of a group of impassioned expectations which had passed through many forms, had taken up various foreign elements into their midst, and had been kindled into vehement activity in many minds by the announcement of the Baptist that the kingdom of God had come nigh. Its watchwords were the division of time into two ages, the age that now is, and the age that is to come ; the judgment and the resurrection ; the Son of David and the Son of Man. The story of Jesus is told through this medium ; his person is enveloped in it from end to end. The Gospels are not so much lives of Jesus in the modern sense, as apologies for Christianity, and, above all, for the Messiah's death. They do not fulfil any of the conditions of biography as we understand it ; they are edifying narratives explanatory of the origin and claims of the Church. 'To such an extent,' observes Prof. Burkitt, 'are the Synoptic Gospels Jewish books, occupied with problems belonging originally to first-century Judaism, that it makes large parts of them difficult to use as books of universal religion.'<sup>1</sup> The Evangelists describe the career of Jesus under

<sup>1</sup> *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus* (1910), p. 27.

the preconception that he is the Christ, just as the compilers of the Buddhist scriptures assume that their teacher Gotama was a Buddha. The first Buddhist books which came into the hands of Western scholars teemed with such wonders that it was natural to view him as a god. Marvels attended his birth, when the world was full of light, and the shining devas in the heavens above waved their robes and sang their songs of praise. Then the blind saw and the dumb spake ; the deaf heard, the lame walked, and the fires in the hells were put out. The Buddha also must be tempted by the Evil One. He, too, can control the demonic powers. He, too, can feed six hundred disciples out of a basket of cakes prepared by an old woman for her husband and herself, and have enough left to supply the poor of the nearest village. A disciple on his way to hear the Master teach finds no boat at the ferry, steps boldly on to the water, and it bears up his feet. But in the middle of the broad stream he is frightened at the waves and begins to sink, when he makes an act of joyful confidence in the Buddha, the water is once more firm as dry ground, and he passes on in safety to the other



side. In the last year of his life the Buddha predicts his death after three months; he is transfigured in the presence of two disciples on the night before; and when he passes out of life a mighty earthquake testifies to the sympathy of nature with his decease. Here is a series of wonders of the most significant description. But no student now doubts the historic reality of the person round whom this robe of miracle has been thrown. It would be perfectly easy to argue that no human being ever lived who did all the things ascribed to the Buddha. Such reasoning would not touch the evidence derived from an immense mass of teaching, often stamped with a lofty individuality, and congruous with many features of Indian life known from other sources. At this point, however, the historian finds support in archæology which Palestine fails to yield. To say nothing of earlier discoveries it may be sufficient to mention that in the autumn of 1909 a large mound was opened near Peshawar. It was a commemorative shrine of the usual type, a solid dome of brick, containing at its core a small square chamber. Ancient tradition led the explorers to expect to find within it some

relics of the Buddha. The expectation was not disappointed. On the floor of the chamber lay a stone casket which contained some tiny fragments of calcined bone. An inscription identified them with the Buddha's remains. There was no reason to doubt their genuineness; and they were solemnly presented by the Viceroy himself in March, 1910, to a deputation of Burmese Buddhists as the nearest heirs of the faith within the Indian Empire.

From the age of the Buddha to the last century the glamour of miracle shines round the long succession of India's teachers. The lives of Christian saints are adorned again and again with the same tissue of marvel. No long time is needed for its growth. The freedman of the Emperor Augustus related that wondrous portents had heralded his master's birth. The Roman Senate, warned of coming danger to their power, resolved that no child born that year should be reared. A little later it was affirmed that the mother of the future ruler of Rome had conceived in the temple of Apollo. Even during his own lifetime the most exalted attributes were ascribed to him. A German archæological expedition in Asia Minor

in the last decade of the last century discovered some remarkable inscriptions among the remains of the ancient cities Halicarnassus and Priênê, Apameia and Eumeneia. They were concerned partly with the introduction into Asia of the Julian calendar, and partly with the institution of a general holiday on the birthday of Augustus, September 23rd. The historian Mommsen referred them to the year 11 or 9 B.C. Very noteworthy is the employment of the word *evangelia*, glad tidings or gospels : ‘ the birthday of the god (τοῦ θεοῦ) is become the beginning of glad tidings (εὐαγγελίων) through him to the world.’ He is designated ‘ the Saviour (σωτήρ) of the whole human race ’ ; he is the beginning of life and the end of sorrow that man was ever born ; he has been sent by Providence to put an end to war ; and peace prevails on earth and sea. When such hopes gathered round the reigning Cæsar, was it surprising that he should be regarded as a very impersonation of Deity ? An inscription at Philæ described him as ‘ star of all Greece who has arisen as great Saviour Zeus ’ ; while the echoes of Egyptian theology are heard in the preceding language which calls him ‘ Zeus out of

Father Zeus.’<sup>1</sup> Yet no one doubts the humanity of Augustus, or the solid reality of his imperial sway.

(iv)

Where, then, shall we seek for the real evidence of the historical character of Jesus? There is in some quarters a growing impression that the modern methods of critical inquiry into the Gospels leave, after all, very little to be known. It is quite true that much remains uncertain. We cannot tell with any precision the year of his birth or death. What impulses sent him to the Jordan bank among the crowd which gathered around John the Baptist, are hidden from us. When he began to teach, how long he was occupied in Galilee, why he retired into Phoenicia, whether he ever visited Jerusalem in his public ministry prior to the passover at which he suffered—these and many other details must remain obscure. But these difficulties do not affect the claim of the large mass of teaching which the First Three Gospels contain to proceed from a real person. It is doubtless the case that various elements have

<sup>1</sup> Wendland, in Preuschen’s *Zeitschr. für N.T. Wissenschaft*, 1904, p. 343.

been absorbed into the Evangelic traditions ; just as it is freely admitted that the process of transmission from memory to memory and from mouth to mouth, and of translation from the Aramean vernacular into Greek, renders us unable to affirm that we have any of the great sayings of Jesus precisely as he uttered them. The supporters of the theory of a 'Christ-myth,' however, make no attempt to show how its various items were precipitated on a single personality ; why that personality was attached to a place that never existed yet was afterwards located on the map ; by what means it was provided with a group of family relations and conducted from Capernaum to Pontius Pilate's judgment hall ; and under whose inspiration it was endowed with a tongue in whose words subsequent generations might find guidance and support. The reader who approaches the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Joseph through the prior 'Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach,' or the 'Sayings of the Fathers' who both preceded and followed him, will hardly dismiss the Gospel teachings as 'Jewish commonplaces.' The Talmudist Fiebig will tell him, for example, that the Talmud contains no parables of the



kingdom such as those ascribed to Jesus; and Mr. Montefiore will invite him to recognize that 'even if you could find separate close parallels for nine hundred and seventy out of, say, the thousand verses in the Gospel in which Jesus is the speaker, and even if you put them together and made a nice little book of them, you would not have produced a substitute of equal religious value. The unity, the aroma, the spirit, the genius, would all have fled. Or, rather, you could not infuse *them* into your elegant collection of fragments and tit-bits.'<sup>1</sup>

Here seems to me to lie the ultimate guarantee for the historical reality of Jesus of Nazareth. Readers of Renan's *Vie de Jésus* may remember how during his preliminary studies in the Syria of to-day the scenery and life of the people shaped themselves in his mind into a kind of fifth gospel. It is impossible in a few sentences to reproduce this impression. There is no philosophy in Jesus' teaching which sums up a past development or opens new lines of thought. He is not a theologian who creates a creed, or a man of science who interprets the physical world. He belongs to the order of prophets, that unique product of Israel's

<sup>1</sup> *The Synoptic Gospels*, vol. i., Introduction, p. cv.

spiritual life ; and the novelty of his speech lies in the note of authority which rests not upon tradition but upon the freshness of experience within. Here lay the ultimate sovereignty of the heart ; this was the final court of appeal. 'Why,' he cried, 'judge ye not even of yourselves what is right ?'

The time was full of tyranny and tribulation. The death of Herod, the subsequent deposition of his son Archelaus in Judea, and the encroachments of Rome, produced unrest and agitation, which the heavy burdens of taxation and the contrasts between wealth and poverty only intensified. In the midst of extravagance on the one hand and want on the other were little groups of men and women who 'waited for the consolation of Israel.' They fed their hopes on the language of ancient prophecy or later apocalyptic ; and scanned the heavens for signs of coming change. Suddenly from the banks of the Jordan a voice rings through the land, 'Repent, for the kingdom of God has drawn nigh !' Crowds gather round the austere figure who wears the prophet's mantle and uses the prophet's speech, and go down into the river to receive at his hand

the baptism of repentance unto forgiveness of sins.

Among the Baptist's hearers is a young man from Nazareth in Galilee, some thirty years old. He is the son of a carpenter or builder, the eldest of a large family, with four brothers and several sisters. He has received the usual education of a Jewish boy. At his mother's knee, or in the village school, he has early learned the great confession of Jewish piety, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is one.' He knows the service in the synagogue, and can stand up and read a lesson in the Sabbath worship, or can sit and preach when prayers are over. Maxims of law and precedents of history and principles of prophecy are laid up ready for instant use in a well-stored memory; he can supersede Moses out of his own writings; and he is apparently imbued with eschatologic lore. He comes out of an upland village, but the great caravans of merchandise between Egypt and Syria have passed to and fro over the Galilean hills; he may be provincial in dialect, he is not so in thought; his outlook reaches north and south and east and west; he glances over court and cottage, over the professors of piety and the disreputable

and forlorn ; he sees cruelty and lust among princes, and hypocrisy among teachers of religion ; and he, too, is moved by the vision of 'the coming wrath,' and joins in the great act of penitence in Jordan's stream.

New hopes, fresh ideas, plans, expectations, rise with swift movement in his mind, and he must needs go apart and wrestle with them. He seeks in solitude the opportunity to shape his course, and the Church afterwards fills it with pictures of the Messiah's trials. But the wilderness cannot hold him long. Does he return to the Jordan bank to find the prophet a prisoner and the crowds dispersed, or did he listen again to his teacher's burning words ? We do not know. The brief tale of Mark leaves an unnamed interval between Jesus' baptism and John's arrest, and we can only infer that it was the Baptist's imprisonment which sent Jesus back to Galilee. There he abandons the comparative isolation of his obscure home, and carries his message to the busy lake with its little towns and thriving industries. Many are the occupations reflected in his words. Still do the fishermen mend their nets in their boats by the lake side ; still do they launch out into

the deep for a cast ; still do they come up out of the water dragging it to shore, and sort the contents, flinging the bad away. Along the plain and on the gentle slopes the sower passes scattering the grain ; or when the harvest is ripe the reapers gather the tares into bundles for fuel. The declivities behind are gemmed with red anemones more splendid than all Solomon's array. Above them the pastures stretch over the hills where the shepherd seeks the wandering sheep. The raven sails out to-day as of old from his nest among the crags, and floats in the air poised high above the lake below. Look to the east, and behind the mountain wall you may see the dawn come up red and lowring. The storm gathers and breaks upon the heights ; the torrent-beds in the ravines are quickly filled with rushing waters, and the ill-built house upon the sandy floor of the valley's mouth is undermined ; the lake is churned into foam as the wind rushes down the gorges, and the boatmen strain and labour at the oar. Enter the peasant's house and you may see the mother kneading the bread for the family meal, patching the clothes of husband or child, or sweeping the floor for a lost coin. Pass to the chandler's shop,



and learn how to give good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over. At the wine-seller's you may find out why new wine should not be put into old skins. The builder will show you how to distinguish the green wood from the dry ; where the chips are flying you will know the meaning of a splinter in the eye ; or as the joiner measures and fits his planks, you will realize why you cannot lengthen your own stature by a cubit. Visit the bazaars, the rich stuffs heaped in profusion among carpet and tapestry are for court-robcs ; the precious pearl, jealously guarded, is a ransom for a king. Or watch the games of the children in the market-square, the mimic wedding and the funeral. Yonder labourers huddled in the shade through the noonday heat, are waiting for a job : the owner of the vineyard calls them time after time till the last hour of daylight. Here are no maxims of moralists, no pedantry of the schools. This is no academic discussion, no formal lecture from the teacher's chair. It is speech coined in the sunlight, minted in the open air. The breath of freedom plays through it ; listen, and you can hear the echoes of the waves lapping on the beach, and the winds

blowing on the hills. A psalmist might have said 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land.' A rabbi or a Chinese sage might have enjoined 'Do not to others what you would not that they should do to you.' A Greek moralist might teach that the wise man was a son of God. A Hindu seer might lay down the overcoming of evil by good as the prime rule of life. You may gather gems from out the centuries as you plod slowly through the literatures of antiquity ; but where in so brief a compass will you find so much which the common heart has since recognized as highest ? Here is concentrated into a few pages a wisdom which is only found elsewhere scattered through climes and generations. What is its source ? It is no scrap-heap of commonplaces, the product of a general insight where everybody is wiser than anybody ; it bears the impress of a great creative personality who can make the homeliest symbols, the simplest imaginative forms, instinct with the spirit of life.

And the action corresponds. There is an originality of conduct as well as of speech. Jesus does what neither Jew nor Greek had done before. He goes to dine with a tax-gatherer ; he sits at

table with the social outcast ; he consorts with all kinds of undesirable types of men and women of low occupation or of none. This is no invention ; it is reality. He opens new paths of redeeming activity ; he seeks out the wanderer and binds up the bruised. We do not hear of Attis that he went about doing good, or of Adonis that he came to save the lost. This is a human novelty, not a mythological datum ; and it has very human issues, which do not admit of explaining a mother's anxieties by the theory that she was a degraded deity. Jesus was well aware of the reputation which he earned. His own half-humorous comments as he compares himself with John, sum up the contrast : ' Abstain from ordinary food, and you are mad ; eat and drink like the rest, you are a glutton and a drunkard.' Was he prepared for the bitterest blow of all, that mother and brothers, alarmed for his sanity, should seek to lay hold on him, to protect him against himself ? The breach was inevitable ; for whom was it harder, for him to say, or for them to hear—' Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother ' ?

The traditions of Jesus, then, present us with

principles, not laws. They are the vehicle of an immense moral impulse, not of a code of rules. Here is spirit instead of system ; a summons to an unworldly life, not a programme of duty ; a challenge to an endeavour, rather than a pattern of conduct. The contrasts between the old order and the new are always conceived in view of the great event so near at hand. But the teaching which rests on universal relations, concerned with man and God, does not lose its worth when its time-frame is shattered. Be it that he accepted the title of Messiah ; be it that he announced the speedy coming of the Son of Man ; be it that the end of the age did not arrive—this may prevent us from worshipping him as God ‘out of God,’ it does not impair the elements in his thought and word, his character and work, which experience confirms. ‘Why must you have a personal Jesus?’ asks Prof. Drews. Did not the worshippers of Mithra carry their faith through Europe, and plant it even on our own Tyne? But Mithraism failed because no *imitatio Mithrae* was possible. The Church conquered with the Gospels in its hand. *There* was a figure of flesh and blood which all could understand and revere.

The victory of Christianity over the Roman Empire was won implicitly when the first collection of Jesus' words was written down. The essence of the Gospel may not lie for us in that which seemed most significant to Jesus and his age. The visions of impending change have passed away, and the world still spins its annual round. But the relation of God and man which Jesus set at the heart of his expectation of the kingdom is our possession for ever. Time has sifted out its transient elements ; it has enlarged its perspective, it has changed its emphasis, and brought its hidden treasures to light. What, then, remains ? Deep in the experience of Christendom is planted that sense of the indissoluble union between our nature and the divine which enabled Jesus to summon the sinner to the highest possible achievement, sure of a response to his call. This is what a modern interpreter, the late Master of Balliol, called his 'idealism.' For the Gospel means that the selfish and the dissolute, the faint-hearted and the feeble-willed, the reckless, the despairing, the defiant, the cruel, are all alike the children of God's providence, have a share in his purpose, and



are bidden by Jesus—with a courage and a confidence which no lapse of years can shake—to be perfect as the Father which is in heaven is perfect. And those who have learned this faith of him will stand by his side, whoever else may go away ; and if he calls across the ages ' Will ye go too ? ' they will answer as of old, though with a wider outlook and different emphasis, ' To whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

## II

### JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

About the year 28 or 29 A.D. a rumour flew through Judea that a prophet, in the prime of early manhood, had appeared in the wilderness, announcing that the kingdom of God had come nigh. Crowds from the capital as well as from the country assembled on the bank of the Jordan, and received the baptism of repentance unto forgiveness of sins. A few months later another young man of about the same age proclaims the same message beside the Lake of Galilee, and carries it from synagogue to synagogue through town and village among the northern hills. Again a few months later, and he commits the same word to twelve followers, sending them out two and two, with instructions to 'Preach, saying, The kingdom of God has come nigh.'

What did this mean? The question takes us into the heart of the most difficult problems of Gospel study. The language ascribed to Jesus in the First Three Gospels is not always consistent. It depends on traditions which may have been already modified through unconscious influences of memory and hope before they were recorded in writing. Moreover, our Evangelists present us with the speech of Jesus transferred from his native vernacular into Greek, and in the process of translation new shades of meaning may have been imparted to his words. There are differences in the point of view of his reporters. The sayings of the Teacher about the future and the end of the age emerge out of a circle of fully formed beliefs in the early Church at a period when they had had time to take up fresh items of popular expectation, and even to be associated with later forms of literary expression. To disentangle all these influences is a problem of extraordinary intricacy. Fresh light has been thrown on it in recent years, partly by more delicate methods of documentary investigation, partly by the study of the long series of apocalyptic works which illuminate the interval between the books of Daniel and of

Revelation, and partly by the endeavour to trace the origins of their mysterious symbols in the older faiths of Persia and of Babylon.

(i)

The term 'kingdom' is in one respect an inadequate rendering of the ancient name. Its true meaning is kingship or rule. The political analogy which presented the divine government after the fashion of human sovereignty, was employed all the way from India to Greece. Among the ancient Vedic hymns some of the noblest gather round the lordly figure of king Varuna. His messengers fly through the world; his ordinances are fixed; he numbers the winking of men's eyes; he knows the flight of birds, the paths of ships upon the ocean, the course of the far-travelling wind; and where two men plot together in secret, he is aware of it, being present there as third. Among the hills and vales of Hellas Zeus is king of gods and men, and Pindar sang of his house in the highest, warning the wrong-doer that 'if a man thinketh that in doing aught he shall be hidden from God, he erreth'; 'for all the sins sinned in this realm of Zeus One

judgeth under earth.' Among the most popular of the Egyptian cults which had made their way in the Empire during the first century of our era, was that of Isis. She, too, was sovereign of a 'kingdom,' into which she 'called' the believer, that he might 'enter in'; she, too, 'saved' from danger, ignorance, and sin; she, too, gave new life to the disciple, so that he was 'born again,' 'changed,' or 'transfigured.'<sup>1</sup> But it was in the ancient Persian theology, in the teachings ascribed to the prophet Zarathustra, that this conception received its most conspicuous development. Among the six 'Holy Immortals' who stood around Ahura Mazda, 'the Lord omniscient,' was the angel of *khshathra* or sovereignty, the kingdom or rule of the divine will. 'We praise the good kingdom' ran the ancient hymn. Even in those early days the service of human need was the best acknowledgment of the kingship of God; for the daily prayer of the believer declared that 'he gives the kingdom to Ahura who bestows succour on the poor.' But this sovereignty was opposed by Añro Mainyu (Ahriman), the evil spirit with his

<sup>1</sup> See Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien-Religion*, 1910, p. 26.



demon powers ; and prophetic hope looked forward to a time when the kingdom should come, and the 'forwards-making' (*frasho-kereti*), the world's advance to the victory of good, should be accomplished. The outlines of this scheme are well known. Later texts might tell of tribulations and calamities, of signs in the heavens, of earthquake and storm on earth. But even the old Avesta announces the advent of a Saviour (*Saoshyant*) who should be the helper or agent in the great consummation. The souls that had been judged after death, and had passed the interval in the heaven of good thoughts, good words, good deeds, or the upper home of song round Ahura's throne, and the condemned who had been consigned to the hell of evil thoughts, words, deeds, would resume their bodies, and the resurrection would take place. A general judgment would once more sever the wicked from the just, but only for three days of pain. For the mountains and the hills would melt, and the fiery stream would overspread the earth. To the righteous it would be like a bath of milk ; the guilty would find it a purifying flame. With a mighty onset the powers of good would overwhelm their antagonists ;

Ahura himself would appear upon the scene ; the great Serpent would be burned ; the hiding-place in which Ahriman would take refuge would be flung into the molten stream, and he too would perish ; then hell should be brought back for the enlargement of the world, and the universe should be immortal for ever and ever.

The main features of this picture of the future were already familiar to the Greeks who followed Alexander the Great into the East. The deported Israelites in Mesopotamia might have become acquainted with it at an earlier date, after Cyrus had swept away the empire of Babylon. The Hebrew seers had long since formulated a doctrine of the divine sovereignty. Isaiah, giving external shape to the profound experience which had summoned him forth to the prophet's task, believed that he had 'seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.' Psalmists sang of his rule as everlasting. It embraced the visible world, the angel-powers to which were delegated the control of the stars, marching in nightly array across the sky, as well as other agencies of nature—wind, rain, dew, and the like—and lastly the motley company of the nations of the

earth and their guardians in the realms above. The chief function of the human king was to give judgment, and popular expectation in Israel as early as the eighth century B.C. had already begun to look forward to 'Yahweh's day,' a day of victory over national enemies, when Yahweh's people should be established in prosperity. It was the daring message of Amos that this would be instead a day of doom, darkness and not light. In varying tones the warning is repeated to a guilty people. First it is Assyria who will be the rod of Yahweh's anger. Then it is from Babylon that the chastisement will come, and Jeremiah actually hails Nebuchadrezzar as the servant of Yahweh's will. Wider is the outlook of a later day, as the prophets predict the dissolution of the world, and announce the creation of new heavens and a new earth. The contact with Persian thought would seem to have begun. Dim hints that the dead may live, and the earth shall cast forth the shades, imply that the stimulus of foreign suggestion is at work. But it is not till the age of Antiochus Epiphanes that the author of the Book of Daniel (about 165 B.C.) definitely promises the great awakening, 'some to everlasting life, some to

shame and everlasting abhorrence.' It is the first formal separation between the destinies of the suffering righteous and the guilty apostates. And here, too, for the first time the doctrine of the kingdom is closely combined with that of a vast world-judgment (*Dan.* vii.).

The seer stands looking over the tumultuous ocean of human life where the four winds of heaven war with the great sea. All is dim, undefined, confused. Up from the sea, one after the other, come four huge beasts. They are the symbols of four empires, in which the writer arranges his scheme of history, Babylonian, Median, Persian, Greek. Suddenly the scene changes. A solemn court is prepared for the great assize. Unnamed ministering agents erect thrones for the judge and the assisting powers. The locality is obscure, but is presumably the earth. God, figured as a venerable man, sits in the midst. The whiteness of his vesture and his hair is the symbol of his radiant purity. Myriads of beings fill the ranks around him as the agents of his decrees. The records of men's doings are brought, and the books are opened. The blasphemies of Antiochus, who had so proudly called himself 'God manifest,'

draw down the first doom on him. The other beasts are judged in turn ; their empire passes, but their peoples survive. And then, descending (it would seem) on clouds from the sky, a new figure is escorted by an angel-retinue, who bring him near to the Ancient of Days. This is no brute form ; he wears a human shape, distinguished from lion, bear, and leopard, as ' like unto a son of man.' And to him is given a kingdom which shall not pass away, but shall withstand all shocks of time and last for ever.

Who is intended by this mysterious figure ? The author himself seems to append an explanation (ver. 27). Like the vanished beasts, this, too, is an earthly sovereignty, that of the people of the saints of the Most High, exalted to power which all dominions must obey. His higher dignity is seen in the human, contrasted with the bestial, form. Had Israel, then, no personal head ? Was there a kingdom without a king ? There is no mention of any Davidic prince ; the ' Branch ' of older prophecy has disappeared. Recent prophecy had hoped for a great divine theophany,<sup>1</sup> without mentioning any national deliverer who should

<sup>1</sup> *Joel* iii. ; *Zech.* xiv. ; *Is.* xxiv.-xxvii.



lead Israel to victorious war, and place it on a universal throne. The Son of Sirach<sup>1</sup> prays that God will lift up his hand against the strange nations, and crush the heads of the hostile rulers; but his hopes turn to Elijah as the agent of the restoration of the scattered tribes.<sup>2</sup> Elijah had already been caught up into heaven; if he was to return, and assume the leadership of Israel, must he not descend in a cloud-chariot from above? The parallel vision of four successive empires, however, in Nebuchadrezzar's dream (*Dan. ii*), closes with the enduring kingdom set up by God (ver. 44) without any human intervention. In the vague pictures of apocalyptic literature, vast and indefinite and grandiose, we must not lay too much stress upon analogies, and insist that if Persia or Syria had its dynastic rulers, triumphant Israel also must have its royal house. That view certainly held its ground in some schools of thought, and the noble description of the Davidic prince in the Psalms of Solomon<sup>3</sup> gives elevated expression to

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclus.* xxxvi. 3 ff; about 180 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> xlviii. 10 cp. *Mal.* iv. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ps.* xvii. Perhaps between 50 and 40 B.C.

this form of the great hope. But it does not explain the appearance of Daniel's solemn figure from the sky.

Later Apocalyptists had no hesitation in identifying him with a specific person. In one of the Books of Enoch, known as the Similitudes (xxxvii.-lxxi.) the Son of Man is very definitely presented in this character (xlvi.).

And there I saw One who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things concerning that Son of Man, who he was and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me 'This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and his lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness for ever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their couches and the strong from their thrones, and will loosen the reins of the strong and grind to powder the teeth of the sinners. And he will put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms because they do not extol and praise him, nor thankfully acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translation of Dr. Charles.

He is subsequently described as the 'Elect' or 'Chosen'; he is the 'Anointed' who will be the light of the Gentiles, and the hope of those who are troubled of heart. Ere the sun and stars were created his name was named before the Lord of Spirits, so that he was brought into being before the world : and judgment will be committed to him when the Lord of Spirits seats him on the throne of his glory, and all evil shall pass away before him and depart.<sup>1</sup> He is not here as in Daniel a symbol of the sovereignty of Israel ; he is its actual administrator ; he is identified with a person and designated as the Messiah.

Later expectation naturally followed this line. The seer of 4 *Ezra* (xiii. 2)<sup>2</sup> combines the details which Daniel separates. He, too, stands by the sea. A wind arises and the waters are lashed into waves, and from the midst arises as it were the likeness of a man who flies with the clouds of heaven. It is he whom the Most High hath kept to deliver them that are upon the earth ; he will stand on the top of Mount Zion and rebuke the nations for their wickedness ; he will thus be both Saviour and Judge. Still later the teachers of the

<sup>1</sup> xlviiii, 2-4 ; lxii. 2 ; lxix, 22.

<sup>2</sup> After 70 A.D.

Synagogue held out the hope that, if Israel were worthy, the Messiah would appear with the clouds of heaven ; but if not, he would come lowly and afflicted, riding upon an ass ; and the last name in the Davidic genealogy in 1 *Chron.* iii. 24, Anani, was identified as a title of the Messiah, and connected fancifully with the word *anan* 'cloud.' In this stream of testimony the Gospel language takes its place, when Jesus announces the coming of the Son of Man in the glory of the Father with the holy angels, and pictures the nations gathered together for judgment before his throne.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scholars have of late been busy with conjectures concerning the antecedents of the Daniel figure. Was it Michael, the angel-patron of Israel, xii. 1 ? so Dr. Cheyne and Prof. N. P. Schmidt. Or was it a being like the angel of Peniel, *Gen.* xxxii. 30, 31, without a name, yet a personal mediator between God and the world, who was at the same time the transcendent and primeval type of humanity, destined to be realized in the kingdom of the saints ? The doctrine of heavenly counterparts belonged to different forms of oriental thought, and had established itself, as the language of St. Paul shows, in Jewish theology before the days of Jesus. The Rabbis had much to say about the glories of the First Man, which were lost by the Fall. It is quite possible that this celestial being had become an apocalyptic figure, as easily recognizable in symbol as the eagle of Rome or the lion of England. The precise original significance it may be beyond our power to

## (ii)

Around this doctrine of judgment other items of expectation slowly gathered. They were never welded into complete coherence, any more than the Messianic type was uniform and consistent. But certain distinctive features of contemporary thought reappear in the preaching of Jesus. A time-scheme has been formulated, and the 'age that now is' will pass into 'the age that is to come.' We hear of 'the judgment' and 'the resurrection'; of 'the kingdom prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world'; of 'the beginning of travail'<sup>1</sup>; of the *parousia*<sup>2</sup> of the Son of Man. His whole teaching is cast into this frame in the

recover. It belongs to a tradition of which only faint traces remain, capable of various interpretations. The problem is complicated by linguistic considerations which appear to show that in the Galilean vernacular the 'Son of Man' would really mean 'the Man.' Modern students of Apocalyptic like Gunkel, Gressmann, Grill, Bousset, Volz, refer 'the Man' to the same group of ideas as the well-known terms 'the Days,' 'the Tribulation,' 'the End,' 'the Second Death.

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xxiv. 8, cf. the so-called 'birth-pains' of the new order.

<sup>2</sup> For the application of this term to the 'advent' of kings and princes, and even of the Saviour-god Asklepios, see Deïssmann, *Light from the East*, p. 372ff.



First Three Gospels. The Hebrew view of the world was essentially dramatic. It was under the government of persons ; it was the scene in which powers of good and evil clashed. Unlike the Greek conceptions of a ruling Mind, expressing itself through a scientific order, Hebrew piety delighted to celebrate the praises of a supreme Will. 'He spake and it was done,' sang the Psalmists ; 'he commanded and it stood fast.' The idea of law in nature was certainly not wanting to the thinkers of Israel, as the Wisdom literature abundantly proves. But their fundamental interpretation of history, under the influence of a passionate nationalism, demanded the accomplishment of a purpose, the fulfilment of a promise. First, the seed of Abraham must inherit the land ; at a later stage it must become the teacher of the nations, the revealer of God to the whole world. Whatever forces opposed it must be overcome ; the victory of good was assured ; the vicissitudes of conquest and defeat might endure for a while, but there was an inner meaning within them which must be realized ; at any moment the mystery of the divine intent might break through, and the goal to which Israel had been

advancing would be reached. This was the 'time of consummation,' the 'consummation of the age.'<sup>1</sup> So great an event would shatter the existing order. It would involve the entry of fresh forces into the world of earth and sky, which would be reshaped to become the scene of the divine presence, the sphere of God's rule. The approach of the kingdom, accordingly, denoted the speedy manifestation of powers hitherto held in reserve. The warning cry of the Baptist, 'It is at hand,' announced that the crisis so long awaited would be delayed no more. In vivid figures he described the judgment as in actual process. The axe of the woodman was laid already at the root of the trees; the gigantic harvester would soon march through the earth, winnowing fan in hand, ready to garner the wheat and burn up the chaff in quenchless flame.

To this appeal Jesus responds. Alone, it would seem, among the Baptist's hearers, he must carry forth the same message,<sup>2</sup> but with a different

<sup>1</sup> *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Zeb. ix. 9; Benj. xi. 3; *Matt.* xiii. 39-40, 49, xxiv. 3, xxviii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> It appears, however, both from the picture of the Baptist's activity in the Fourth Gospel, and from the curious episode

emphasis on its contents. New interpretations, fresh possibilities, rise in his mind. He chooses for the scene of his work the busiest group of towns in the region of his own home. He assumes no unusual character, however endeared by national tradition. He wears no prophet's mantle, eats no ascetic's food. He utters no threats of national doom. He has learned to live in fellowship with the Father who is in heaven; and to bring men and women to him is more urgent than to utter warnings of terror and paint prospects of hell. So he passes from the Teacher's seat in the synagogue to stand by the sick bed. He has an immense sympathy with the poor, the forsaken, the disreputable, the social outcast. He is not afraid to consort with the lax in ceremonial observances, those who were technically sinners because they did not keep the sabbath, or distinguish the clean from the unclean. The righteous could find the way into the kingdom for themselves; it was the degraded, engaged in occupations that defiled,—the wastrel, condemned by

in *Acts* xix. 1-7, that the movement which he inaugurated spread more widely than we might have imagined from our Synoptic authorities.

conventional piety—whom he had come to invite. Soon would the great banquet be spread; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, would take their seats and summon the guests; who would be ready to attend the feast? A note of urgency runs through the speaker's words. Much of his language is addressed to those who have already given up all home-ties to follow him. The time is short: there is so much to be done; the nation must be won ere it is too late; 'let Gentile and Samaritan alone; seek out Israel's lost sheep.' The atmosphere is charged with an intensity of expectation, reflected in the rapidity of Mark's narrative, which moves from incident to incident in breathless speed, as he links one to another by 'immediately.' It reaches its climax in the announcement attributed to Jesus (*Matt.* x. 23) in his directions to the Twelve about their first missionary expedition, 'You will not have gone over the cities of Israel before the son of Man arrives.'

Did Jesus, then, as Albert Schweitzer has argued,<sup>1</sup> suppose that while the Twelve were absent on their preaching tour, he would himself

<sup>1</sup> *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 357ff.

be transformed into this mysterious being? Did he expect the end so soon, and so confidently, that he could assure his disciples of his appearance from the sky on clouds of glory before they returned from their several fields of toil? That view involves so many incongruities that only a robust faith in the Evangelist's accuracy can sustain it. If Jesus had already disclosed himself in that character to his immediate followers, how is it that his instructions to preach the near arrival of the kingdom contain no hint of this august function? Why was he silent about his own share in the coming change? And why at a later stage in his ministry does he enquire not only what common rumour said about him, but also what they themselves imagined him to be? The question at Caesarea Philippi has no meaning if he has already announced his advent as the Man from heaven. The course of events did not correspond with this expectation. The shock of personal disappointment is assumed to have driven him to the desperate venture of going to Jerusalem and courting death, in order to constrain the Father to send him back out of the sky to judge the world. But what of the dis-



appointment of the Twelve? Would they have continued to trust a leader who thus mistook the purposes of God? No doubt the story of Second Advent prophecy is not without significant instances of faith that triumphed over frustrated prediction, and, when one date passed and nothing happened, only asked confidently for the next to be fixed. But it is hard to believe that even the singular attraction which Jesus exercised over those most closely associated with him could have suffered no wound from so great a failure. Does it not seem more probable that among the mixed elements of the whole discourse this saying reflects the eager hope of a later day, and really belongs to counsels and warnings given to the early missionaries who went forth from Jerusalem in their Master's name?

But though this particular saying cannot with any certainty be ascribed to Jesus, at least in its present context, there remain many others which entirely confirm the belief that he looked for the arrival of the kingdom in the immediate future. The disciple must watch with girded loins and burning lamp, for the Son of Man will come at an hour unforeseen (*Luke* xii. 35-40; *Matt.* xxiv. 44).

So near is the great event that at his last meal with the apostles, to whom (according to *Matt.* xix. 28) he has already promised twelve thrones for judging the twelve tribes of Israel, he makes a rendezvous with them to drink new wine together in the kingdom where they shall be the honoured companions at his table.<sup>1</sup> The national element here unexpectedly breaks through. It is of rare occurrence in his teaching. The pictures which Jewish hope delighted to hang in its chambers of imagery had no charm for him. The overthrow of foreign tyrannies, nations submissive beneath Israel's rule, tributes and gifts of kings, Jerusalem exalted in splendour, the land miraculously fertile, mothers giving birth without pain, the saints reigning in Palestine—such details did not belong to the kingdom of God and his righteousness<sup>2</sup> which he proclaimed as the objects of an untiring quest (*Matt.* vi. 33). Nevertheless its scene would be on earth, though an earth restored to paradisaal innocence; it would involve an immense transformation of the existing order; the suffering poor

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xxvi. 29; *Luke* xxii. 18-30.

<sup>2</sup> The righteousness required by God as a condition of acquittal in the judgment and entry into the kingdom.

should receive in it the compensation for their pain ; and the rich, the full, the laughing, would find their lot reversed.

For the kingdom of God would take its character from God. Inasmuch as he was a righteous God, the lord of purity and peace, his rule would make similar demands on those who came beneath his sway. The physical conditions of the new life hardly come into view. The humanity of the future will need marriage no more ; the earthly bodies will be changed into angelic glory. But the figures of the bridal and the feast imply throughout that the kingdom will have some collective character, and whatever be its locality and conditions, its inhabitants, engaged in fulfilling the will of God, will still be involved in moral relations both to him and to each other. In that world where there are greater and lesser, there are differences of capacity as there also are of opportunity, and these at once carry with them ethical demands. The teaching of Jesus, however, rarely projects itself so far, and then only to hint, as in the parable of the talents, that faithful service here will be rewarded by increased responsibility hereafter. But that implies that the con-

duct and temper which would qualify men for entrance into the kingdom, would be continued under the changed conditions of the blessed life. When Jesus tells the scribe who has commended his selection of the two great commandments, that he is not far from the kingdom, he does not mean that on reaching it God and his neighbour will have no more claim on him for love. These obligations would still continue, but they would not be fulfilled in bondage to law, they would be the joyous outflow of spiritual affection. In preaching the coming of the kingdom Jesus never supposed himself to be either proclaiming the future abrogation of all duty, or founding a new religion and inaugurating a new morality for ages yet unborn. He was the herald of a vast supernatural event, which, whatever its issue for others, would affect Israel first and chief of all. The scope of this event was undefined; around its margin he drew no precise limits; but his first function was to prepare his people for it, and though few might be chosen, to carry the great invitation forth to all. In doing so he shed so much light upon the spiritual foundations of all social life that his insights have supplied

the best guidance for feeling and action ever since. It is quite true that the stories of the wandering son or the Samaritan traveller are not confined within the time-frame in which so many of Jesus' sayings are presented. They belong to humanity at large, and have just as much significance whether the resurrection and the judgment be near or remote. But it is no less true that much more, the heroic note of renunciation, the summons to immediate surrender of property, or the breach with family ties, imply an order which is about to pass away. 'Let me bid farewell to them that are at my house,' pleads a would-be disciple. 'No man,' replies Jesus austerely, 'having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'

(iii)

There was, however, in Jewish usage another sense in which the kingdom was not something destined to arrive from outside, it was already realized through religion itself. The hearts of the faithful recognized the rule of God as a present fact. The divine sovereignty might be exercised through the Law. A convert who repeated the



sacred confession of the Divine Unity beginning 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is one' (*Deut.* vi. 4-9), was said to 'take upon himself the yoke of the kingdom.' Why, it was asked, did this precede the second passage selected as its sequel, *Deut.* xi. 13-21, with its promises to the obedient and its warnings to the disloyal? 'In order,' was the answer, 'that a man may first take on himself the yoke of the kingdom, and afterwards the yoke of the commandments.' This was no galling burden, but a privilege and delight; it was contrasted with the yoke of worldly care, or again with the yoke of political subjection. The service of the Law was the response of Israel to its heavenly Lord; and while the rabbis piled up their rules of minute observance round the sabbath, they did so in honour of it as 'a day of the holy kingdom for all Israel.' It is only a step—though a step of far-reaching significance—from this conception of the kingdom as a rule of God embodied in an actual collection of positive laws to the more spiritual view of it implied in the usual interpretation of the saying of Jesus (*Luke* xvii. 21), 'The kingdom of God is within you.' The conscience is the sphere

of God's government. He dwells as king and judge within the heart. Through our affections he claims our allegiance, as law and love meet and blend within the soul, and the obedience of the subject is transmuted into the fellowship of the son. Here, it is suggested, the kingdom appears as a universal spiritual fact, potential at any rate, if not actually realized. It is the expression of an ethical sovereignty, which exercises its sway over all conscious moral agents, and reveals itself in man through the authority of right. The interpretation is, however, challenged even in the margin of our Revised Version, where an alternative rendering is offered, 'The kingdom of heaven is in the midst of you.' For the kingdom was not, it is pleaded, in the hearts of the Pharisees, to whom Jesus was replying. They showed none of its righteousness, its peace, its joy in the Holy Spirit. 'Among them' it might be; it was already planted in the community around them; could they but open their eyes to see, they would find the seed already sprouting; had they only the real insight, they would note how the leaven had begun to work. But early students of the Gospel understood the

words in yet another sense : ' it is in your hands, in your power,' said Tertullian, ' if you hear and do the command of God ' ; ' it lies in your power to lay hold of it,' said Cyril, ' by loyal purpose and steadfast act.' Is that, however, an adequate explanation of the words in their present context ? The Pharisees have enquired when the kingdom, which Jesus declared to be so near, would really come. The Teacher answers that it will be no use to watch for it ; no brightening dawn will precede its sun-rise ; it will appear like lightning (ver. 24), flashing unheralded across the sky ; so sudden will be its arrival, there will be no time to point to its approach and say ' Lo, here ! lo, there,' for it will be already in their midst.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Those who take this view point out that in the Aramean speech of Jesus the verb ' is ' would not be required or probably expressed. The future ' shall say ' suggests a parallel ' will be.' A similar observation applies to some other passages, such as *Matt.* v. 3, 10, all the other blessings having the future in the second clause. An interesting glimpse into a more mystical interpretation is gained from one of the Oxyrhynchus Logia (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, iv. 6) : ' You ask who are those that draw us to the kingdom if the kingdom is in heaven ? . . . The fowls of the air and all the beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, these are they which draw you, and the kingdom of heaven is within you, whosoever shall know himself shall find it.'

## (iv)

Whatever be the particular interpretation of these famous words, it is clear that the eschatological view of the kingdom is too deeply planted in the Gospels to be other than original. But this was not inconsistent at the outset of Jesus' preaching with the belief that it was also in some sense present. When Jesus pronounces a blessing on the poor in the crowd of listeners before him, 'for yours is the kingdom of God' (*Luke* vi. 20), it is probable that he is not stating a spiritual fact (as *Matt.* v. 3 suggests), but declaring that the kingdom will hereafter belong to them, when those that weep now under oppression shall laugh in liberty. But the 'little flock' who would receive the gift of the kingdom at God's hand (*Luke* xii. 32), might be said to be its seed already. As their numbers grew, the heavenly rule would silently extend its sway. The leaven was at work, gradually pervading the community, carrying its expanding force into unexpected quarters, and effecting the preparation for the great arrival of the sovereignty from on high. But the period within which these forces of growth would operate, was very short. We read these parables in the midst of an age-long

development. We use them as symbols of vast perspectives of moral and religious evolution, the future phases of which have yet to be fulfilled, and are beyond our power to forecast. Their original application, however, was much more confined, and a kind of riddle is produced by the attempt to present the process in a totally different time-frame. In the light of history we suppose that Jesus figured the kingdom to himself as originally lodged in a small group of chosen followers who should ultimately swell into a mighty host spread all over the face of the earth ; or possibly as an ethical-spiritual influence which should slowly transform the institutions of human things into the vehicles of a divine Order, where God's will should be done on earth as in heaven. Neither of these conceptions corresponds to the apocalyptic element in his teaching. He looks for a great transcendent manifestation ; it is his part to awaken his people to its imminence, to win them to repent ere it arrives, and show them the dispositions God demands from those who would enter it. But the heavenly rule will be much more than the harmony of a few select wills on earth ; it will be something immeasurable, marvellous, for the



forces of evil must be overthrown, and the power of the Adversary crushed.

In the course of his activity Jesus seems to have reached the conviction that this victory had already begun. Over against the rule of God lay the rule of the Opposer, the Sâtân. It was exerted in many ways, and so completely enveloped the existing scene that it was possible for the disciple of a later day to affirm that the whole world lay in the Evil One (1 *John* v. 19). Its demonic forces swarmed out of the abyss, and the sufferers whom they drove to disease and madness became the victims of its tyranny. The ability of Jesus to control these hapless patients drew down upon him the malignant charge that he cast out demons by the aid of their own prince, Beelzebub. How foolish, retorts Jesus, to suppose that Satan will divide his power and cast out himself! And if he was leagued with a lord of hell, by whom, he asks the Pharisees, did their disciples work their cures? 'Let them judge you!' But if he wrought by God's spirit, it was plain that God's rule was already extending itself over them. The kingdom, then, was actually entering the existing scene; it lay, in some sense, with him; he was

more than its herald, he was its inaugurator, its representative, its organ, the first instrument of its great transformation. The germ of a new hope was thus planted in his heart. He looked back over the great days of king and prophet. The Queen of the South had come to learn wisdom of Solomon; Jonah had persuaded the men of Nineveh to repent; but in the promise of the kingdom there was something greater still<sup>1</sup>; woe to the indifferent generation which they would arise to condemn. His own success was confirmed by his followers. When the disciples return full of gladness in their unexpected powers—the demons had submitted at their Master's name—he joyously declares that he has seen Satan fall like lightning from the sky; the power of evil is expelled from the heaven where the Adversary still dared to claim a place, and is cast out as swiftly as the kingdom, he afterwards affirms, shall enter in<sup>2</sup> (*ante* p. 86.) These seasons of exaltation lifted him above hours of disappointment and moments of anger at mis-

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xii. 41-42. The neuter adjective, as the Revisers' margin indicates, should not be interpreted personally.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke* x. 18. The saying has all the appearance of originality, though the Evangelist seems to have placed it in a later connexion than it probably originally occupied.

understanding or failure, coldness or opposition ; and they finally led him to ask of his disciples at Cæsarea Philippi, the decisive questions ‘ Who do men say I am ? ’ and ‘ Who say you ? ’

The answers to these questions are significant. Common talk had already been busy with his name. Rumour had carried it all through the country-side. It had even penetrated into Herod’s court, and the conscience-stricken king had identified him with the murdered John come back to life. Others conjectured that one of the ancient prophets had been allowed to reappear ; and imagination fixed on the preacher of the ‘ new covenant,’ Jeremiah, or the forerunner of the great divine event, Elijah. None of these guesses had divined the truth. Plainly, no claim to any special dignity had yet been made ; he might still be addressed as Rabbi ; he might describe himself—perhaps in a proverbial phrase—as a prophet (*Mark* vi. 4) ; among his countrymen, at any rate, he had won no distinctive place in the kingdom which he preached. But in the inner circle of the disciples a new conviction had been gaining ground. Who was this teacher who had sent them forth ? When he bade them preach the advent

of the kingdom, he had said nothing of himself ; yet he had charged them to heal the sick and cast out demons, and disease had fled at their word (*Mark* vi. 7-13) ! The power he exercised he could impart to them ; nay, so mighty was his name that others could use it successfully who had not joined their little band (*Mark* ix. 38). To those most intimately associated with him he must needs seem incomparably greater than any tales about him could suggest. That mysterious power of personality which wrought in word and look and touch, no gossip about him in synagogue or bazaar or village market-place could ever convey. As his own secret hope grew clearer, a parallel conviction rose in the minds of the disciples. They must have been questioned often enough about him. When they entered a hamlet to buy food or seek a night's lodging, they must have been asked whose messengers they were. Curiosity might have to remain unsatisfied ; but the wonder of it all would grow larger day by day till at length the moment of confidence and disclosure comes, and Peter bursts forth, 'Thou art the Messiah.'<sup>1</sup>

The secret which teacher and disciples had

<sup>1</sup> *Mark* viii. 29.

thus come to share without communicating it to each other, is at last revealed. True, it is full of peril and must be kept in strict reserve, for the name might easily rouse expectations which lay outside Jesus' whole vision. He would be no national leader to expel the Romans and lead Israel to victory. But the 'gospel of the kingdom' must be preached in the capital. Pharisee and Sadducee had gone out to the Jordan to hear John; he would carry 'the word' to them in the centre of their activity, and challenge the whole hierarchy to repent. The enterprise involved grave risks. No one could tell how a conflict with the temple-authorities might end. There were dismal traditions of the persecutions of the preachers of righteousness. Jerusalem had an evil fame as the slayer of prophets. The disciples, therefore, must be forewarned, and in the light of later issues these warnings assumed more definite and specific shape.<sup>1</sup> But the traditions embodied in Mark, and moulded by the Evangelist into a kind of apology for the cross, clearly indicate the presence of a new element

<sup>1</sup> It does not, however, seem possible to suppose that Jesus meant deliberately to provoke his own death.



in Jesus' outlook. For the first time he makes definite reference to the appearance of the 'Son of Man,'<sup>1</sup> who will come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (*Mark* viii. 38). The purpose of this advent is not defined ; it is, however, implied in the words that follow : ' Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.' The kingdom would be inaugurated with the judgment, when the Son of Man would sit on the throne of his glory.<sup>2</sup> The language of *Matt.* xvi. 27-28 is, accordingly, more explicit :—

The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels ; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

(v)

The journey to Jerusalem is full of mingled hope and apprehension. Prospects of danger and of

<sup>1</sup> On *Matt.* x. 23 see p. 77f. It may be noticed that the preceding passage 17-22 corresponds to a section in the great eschatological discourse placed by Mark on the Mount of Olives, xiii. 9-13, which contains indications of later date.

<sup>2</sup> *Enoch* xlv. 3, lxix 27 ; *Matt.* xxv. 31.

triumph alternate before the leader's vision as he presses ever forwards, and his adherents follow dumb with amazement and alarm. To James and John he puts the searching question, 'Can you drink the cup that I drink?' for a bitter draught of suffering and sorrow may be offered to him. But to the Twelve he blithely promises twelve thrones for judgment over the twelve tribes of Israel. The little procession passes through Jericho and the crowd grows apace. He rides in to Jerusalem upon an ass, prophetic emblem of a peaceful king; acclaimed as 'he that cometh' with blessing in the Lord's name by those who marched in front and rear. The procession climbs the steep slope beneath the city-walls, and, unchecked, enters the Temple, where his spirit is roused to the one high-handed act of his career, and he drives the traffickers and money-changers forth. Questioned about his right to disturb the sanctuary with such violence, he parries the attack with a counter-question as to the source of John's baptism, from heaven, or of men. The situation grows more hopeless day by day. The deputations bring their pitiful dilemmas; but strained expectation begins to give way, and he

is at length convinced that nothing can be expected from the professed teachers of religion; the Temple must fall; and the kingdom pass to another and more fruitful people.

It is at this point that Mark inserts the long apocalyptic discourse ascribed to Jesus as he sits with his four earliest followers on the Mount of Olives, gazing across the valley at the glittering buildings of the 'city of the great King.'<sup>1</sup> Nowhere else does Mark attempt to mass together so many sayings in continuous sequence. They are singularly mixed in character. Warnings against false Christs, predictions of wars, earthquakes, and famines, visions of the sufferings and terror of the Roman invasion, blend with encouragements to endurance in persecution, foresight of apostles before Sanhedrin and governor, or even, possibly, prevision of the horrors of the Neronian orgy at Rome.<sup>2</sup> The prophecy culminates in the announcement of the coming of

<sup>1</sup> The privacy of this utterance to a small select group is a way of indicating that it was not commonly known.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the Rev. B. H. Streeter, in *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, edited by Prof. Sanday, 1911, p. 181.

the Son of Man, which Matthew adorns with some additional details.

*Mark xiii 24-27.*

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken :

and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send forth the angels,

and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven.

*Matt. xxiv. 29-31.*

But immediately, after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The day and the hour of this crisis are unknown ; that secret is reserved for God alone. But its arrival in the immediate future is declared with the utmost clearness, in language common to all three Evangelists (*Mark xiii. 13-31 ; Matt. xxiv. 34-35 ; Luke xxi. 32-33*) :—

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away,

until all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

It has been long recognized that various elements are here in combination. Luke has handled them most freely, and given to them the most explicit application to the destruction of Jerusalem (xxi. 21-24). From what sources, however, have they been derived? What alien prophecies have been mixed with the words of the Teacher? And by what marks can they be distinguished? Such questions are more easily asked than answered. But the most cautious English scholarship is beginning to acknowledge the diversity of points of view which the discourse contains. Prof. Charles long ago noted the combination of two mutually exclusive anticipations of the great change.<sup>1</sup> According to one the Advent of the Son of Man would take the world by surprise; while another expected a long and terrible series of premonitory signs. Some students still see no reason for such partition, while they admit the probability of some editorial changes. Prof. Stanton, of Cambridge, on the

<sup>1</sup> *Hebrew and Christian Eschatology*, p. 323ff. He even referred the crucial verses, quoted above, to a Jewish source.



other hand, in the course of an elaborate inquiry into the materials employed by the Evangelists,<sup>1</sup> concludes that this piece probably came into Mark's hands as a separate written composition, founded on a Jewish Christian document, written in Palestine before 70 A.D., perhaps a little after the year 60.<sup>2</sup> More adventurous investigators like Wellhausen and Loisy (not to mention their predecessors) suppose that a short Jewish apocalypse lies at the base, with Christian expansions and additions, in which some actual words of Jesus may perhaps be incorporated. In this confusion certainty is impossible. Even Dr. Plummer reminds us that 'we have constantly to remember that we cannot be sure that we have got the exact words which our Lord employed.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, pt. II, p. 115ff.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Streeter takes a similar view, with a preference for a date about 70, *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *Commentary on Matthew*, 1909, p. 338. How heavily the difficulty presses on traditional orthodoxy may be seen in the words of Prof. Inge, of Cambridge, in a sermon before the University. 'Very few critics accept as authentic the apocalyptic prophecy in Mark 13; may there not be one or two more innocent interpolations of the same kind? I do not wish entirely to exclude the possibility that our Lord in becoming man may have been willing to share, to some

If the Gospel evidence is thus indecisive, is there any other testimony ?

One further scene must be briefly noted before we leave our Synoptic narratives. The passover approaches, and (according to our present texts) Jesus prepares to celebrate it with the Twelve.<sup>1</sup> He has divined his danger ; the gathering opposition of the priestly party is culminating in a plot ; and mingled yearnings, hopes, and fears, sound through his words. How he has longed to eat that meal with them ! The next time they drink wine together will be at the great banquet in the

extent, the current popular illusions, both with regard to the Messianic hope and demoniacal possession. But this certainly must not be stretched so far as to admit that he fancied himself filling the rôle of Daniel's Son of Man in the near future. Such a notion would not be compatible with sanity, far less with those attributes which all Christians believe him to have possessed.'—*Guardian*, May 13, 1910. Prof. Burkitt, on the other hand, ascribing this or similar language to Jesus himself, thinks that he can only be relieved of the charge of 'megalomania' by the consideration that though 'the end so clearly foretold did not come,' the Church did. The Athanasian Creed accordingly provides a 'starting-point in justifying ourselves for paying worship' to him.—*The Athanasian Creed and Liberal Christianity*, 1910, pp. 17, 24.

<sup>1</sup> The grave divergence now admitted between the First Three Gospels and the Fourth does not concern us here.

kingdom! Is it, then, so near, that he can appoint a meeting among the thrones in the new life (*Luke* xxii. 18-30; *Matt.* xxvi. 29)? For him, at any rate, the passage to it lies through the valley of the shadow of death. The crisis that has been a possibility for weeks is close at hand. Under the olives in Gethsemane he gains strength to meet it. The issue is not clear to him, but God's will shall be done, and if the cup is given him he will drink it. The moment of arrest fixes the issue, and brings with it the calm of anticipated doom. Amid confused charges and contradictory testimony he bears himself in silence in the judgment-hall. At length the high-priest can contain himself no longer; he rises from his seat and confronts his victim with the direct question, 'Are you the Messiah?' It is met without qualification or reserve by the direct assertion: 'I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'<sup>1</sup> In the usual identification of the Son

<sup>1</sup> So *Mark* xiv. 62; from the indirect reply in *Matt.* xxvi. 64 others have inferred a refusal to answer. 'The Power' is a well-known Aramaic equivalent for God.—Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, pp. 200-1.

of man with Jesus but one interpretation can be put upon these words. The scene will soon be changed, and the situation will be reversed. He will be seated on the judge's throne, and his captors will receive their doom at his hands.

But that did not happen.

(vi)

It is pleaded that we cannot trust an exceptional detail. None of the immediate followers of Jesus was present at the trial. He was, however, executed as 'the king of the Jews,' according to the popular notion of the Messiah. That is, of course, no guarantee of the authenticity of his confession. But it is difficult to believe that the general tenor of the charges brought against him, and the nature of his reply, were not known with substantial accuracy. The disciples were not dependent afterwards solely on hostile testimony. Joseph of Arimathea, who begged his body from Pilate, was himself a member of the Sanhedrin, and may be presumed to have been at the council-meeting and heard his words. When the apostles returned to Jerusalem from Galilee, and gathered up the remembrances of the fatal night, can we

suppose that they had not some first-hand evidence of incident and speech?

At any rate, the expectation of the early Church was plain. If we are warned by modern scholars that we must not interpret vivid oriental metaphors too rigidly, it may be said that this caution should have been addressed to the Apostle Paul. Before any of our present gospels had been written, he had already described the approaching advent of the Messiah from the sky in the near future. Writing to the church at Thessalonica to comfort those who feared lest their dead kin should be left out of the benefits of the *parousia*, he assures them that those who had already died should be the first to rise (1 *Thess.* iv. 15-17).

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord,<sup>1</sup> that we that are alive, that are left in the coming (*parousia*) of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God<sup>2</sup>; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught

<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary here to inquire whether this is to be understood of a direct revelation to Paul himself, or of the authority of apostolic tradition.

<sup>2</sup> For the trumpet cp. 1 *Cor.* xv. 52, *Matt.* xxiv. 31, *Rev.* viii. 2, 2 *Esdras* vi. 23.



up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord.

The predictions attributed to Jesus, then, cannot be regarded as fulfilled at Pentecost, seven weeks after his death, on the ground of St. Paul's identification of 'the Lord' with 'the Spirit,' for twenty years or so later the great Apostle was still looking for the Messiah's return. How could this hope, which pervades the literature of the first age of the Church, have been so passionately cherished if it had not had some foundation in the language of Jesus himself? The nature of that foundation, however, is exceedingly obscure. If Jesus expected himself to appear in the character of the Son of Man on clouds of light, it is strange that he should never have said 'You shall see me coming.' Moreover, this mysterious figure had already shared the heavenly life before sun and star were made (p. 71). If Jesus identified himself with it, why does he give no hint that he had already descended to occupy a human form? The Fourth Evangelist does not hesitate to explain that the Son will return by the way of the cross to the glory which he had with the Father before the world came into being. But in the Synoptic

presentment the Rabbi-prophet tells of no earlier home above the skies. And the uncertainty and anguish of Gethsemane are unintelligible in the prospect of impending triumph. What were a few hours of suffering compared with the exaltation of the Judge of all mankind! It is of course obvious on the gospel-page that Jesus again and again applies the title 'Son of Man' to himself. But there are sufficient instances to show how readily tradition might shape his words into this mould, for while one Evangelist reports them in the third person, another unhesitatingly employs the first. In the two following cases, for example, priority seems to be alternately with Matthew and Luke.

*Matt. v. 11.*

Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, . . . and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

*Luke vi. 22.*

Blessed are ye when men shall . . . reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake.

*Matt. xx. 28.*

Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.

*Luke xxii. 27.*

I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.

In one significant saying *Luke* employs the designation 'Son of Man' in such a way as to

imply a clear difference between Jesus and that exalted personality, xii. 8.

Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God.

No one, probably, reading these words for the first time, would identify the speaker with the Son of Man. *Matthew's* version of the phrase significantly omits the title, and only states (x. 32) that whoever acknowledges Jesus before men, shall be acknowledged by him before his Father in heaven. This seems the function of a witness rather than a judge. When the language thus varies from gospel to gospel, it is impossible to feel any absolute security about the words in any specific passage. He never says 'I shall judge the nations.' I can, therefore, but state a personal impression, namely, that Jesus did use the figure of the coming of the Son of Man as a symbol of the inauguration of the kingdom, connecting it more or less definitely with the anticipation of the judgment. That he supposed himself to be designated to that high office, and expected after death to take his seat at God's right hand, and descend thence amid the angelic throng to summon the world to his great assize, appears to

pass the bounds of likelihood. His own conception of his Messiahship appears to have attached itself to the prophetic figure of the Servant of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> His confidence in the speedy close of the age, ere his own generation should have passed away, rose out of his conviction that the evils of the time must soon provoke God's purifying work. It is always the prophet's faith that the triumph of the good must be at hand. The victory of God's will cannot be delayed; his purpose of righteousness must be already on the way; no human opposition can arrest it; those to whom Jesus speaks shall see the kingdom.

Their hope, however, was not fulfilled. Jesus did not come back. The attempts to connect the coming of the Son of Man with the experiences of Pentecost or the fall of Jerusalem break down in view of the fixed idea of the early Church that the vanished Christ would personally reappear. But if that great event never occurred, and is no longer part of modern faith, does Christianity pass away with it? We are told that 'Liberal Christianity' has failed, because the teaching of Jesus which is

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *The First Three Gospels*, 4th ed. 1909, pp. 383, 390.

the salt of our higher life was never designed for the vast historic evolution in which it still holds the central place. Be it that he did not foresee that his name would be carried round the globe, or that the thoughts and hopes which he awakened would suffice to sustain the trust of continents and generations to our day. The fact remains that the Christian ideal conquered the ancient paganism and proved the animating spirit of the Church. Which was the more potent argument of Christian apologetic (for both were used), 'You need not hesitate to believe in our Christ, because like wonders are related of your Perseus or Æsculapius,' or 'Believe, because no man ever said like him, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you."?' Here is the power which subdued Rome, and bore the tremendous burden of mediæval claims to keep the keys of heaven and hell. That which preserved Christianity alive from age to age, and prevented it from being stifled by a vast mass of alien importations, was its moral and religious ideal, the constant challenge of a higher and holier character, impersonated in a great historic figure so that all could see. It



is in reality eschatological Christianity which has failed. It did its work in supplying the immediate motive for the Christian missions; but it was soon found necessary to transmute it into the forms of the inner life suggested in the Fourth gospel; or to reply to the question 'Where is the promise of his coming?' by non-natural interpretations of Scripture; or to evade the difficulty which its sacred books contained by planting them securely on the authority of the Church. When the teachers of a later age ceased to present Jesus as the 'deliverer from the coming wrath' (1 *Thess.* i. 10), the triumph of Christianity over the cults which surrounded it was due to the intrinsic superiority of its moral and spiritual force. It is the task of modern liberalism to disengage this force from the ideas and hopes through which it was first conveyed, as well as from the dogmatic forms by which it was subsequently circumscribed. The robes of an unreal dignity are being slowly removed from its central personality. The world in which Jesus now takes his place is infinitely vaster both in space and time than he or his contemporaries could have conceived. The per-

spectives of the future which were closed to him, have already lengthened to embrace nineteen centuries, and no one dreams of fixing an approaching term for the world's life. But the ideals of the Gospel have awakened with new might. The more clearly their temporary associations are eliminated, the more powerful is their permanent appeal. Truly is it said that 'Christianity has yet its grandest victories to win.'<sup>1</sup> It has been the inspiration of the highest art and the noblest poetry. It has largely evoked and sustained the most significant energy of our time—whatever extravagance it may assume—the passion for social welfare. It lies at the heart of the movement of international peace and goodwill. It has descended as a great tradition into a scene infinitely more complex than that in which it first saw the light, and it is advancing towards wider and deeper sway. Beneath the lip-service paid to it too often in its churches, its mighty impulses are yet moving multitudes outside who never wish to hear its name. Eschatological Christianity—when it is really understood—will pass away, and it will carry a good deal of decaying doctrine with

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Drummond, in *Jesus or Christ*, 1909, p. 208.

it. The Apocalyptic Christ will be seen to be the centre of a mirage, the brilliant but elusive figure of a dream. We shall cease to cherish expectations which history so soon refuted. But the spirit of life which was in Jesus Christ will continue to inspire man's best efforts for human progress : and the eternal longing for justice will still prompt the prayer for the ' rule of God '—

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
As in heaven, so on earth.

## NOTE

Among many recent discussions, beside that of Schweitzer already cited, the attention of English readers may be directed to the following works :—

*The Prophet of Nazareth*, by Prof. N. P. Schmidt,  
1905 ;

*The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, by Prof.  
Sanday, 1907 ;

The Papers read by Prof. F. G. Peabody (of  
Harvard University) and Prof. Burkitt (Cam-  
bridge) at the Third Congress of the History

of Religions, *Transactions*, vol. ii., Oxford, 1908 ;

*Jesus according to S. Mark*, by the Rev. J. M. Thompson, 1909 ;

The valuable *Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, by Mr. C. G. Montefiore, 2 vols., 1909, and the same writer's *Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, 1910 ;

And *The Eschatology of the Gospels*, by Prof. von Dobschütz, 1910 (lectures at the Summer School of Theology, Oxford, 1909).

### III

## THE THEOLOGICAL CHRIST

BETWEEN the Sermon on the Mount and the Creed of the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) there is an interval of nearly three centuries. It was a period big with momentous issues, for it was the formative age of the Church. It saw Christianity launched into the midst of the Roman Empire, at first derided and persecuted, then victorious and triumphant. The teachings of the Galilean were carried forth to the Greek; and the apocalypse of the wrath of God was captured and transformed by philosophy. Singular indeed is the combination implied in the ascription of the Book of Revelation and the Fourth Gospel to one author. The one is full of passion and tumult, the other mirrors a wondrous calm; but the same person is the hero of both. To trace in detail the steps by which these two conceptions were fused to-



gether, is the work of the historian of Christian doctrine. He must take account of a wide variety of influences, and record numerous experiments ere the result was reached. Here it is possible only to suggest a point of view. We all of us have of necessity our presuppositions. Our previous training, our range of knowledge, the forms of our religious experience, all contribute to mould our judgment and shape our thought. Among the preconceptions which are often brought to the great enquiry, is the belief that the process of the development of doctrine concerning the person of Jesus Christ was really unique. The interpretation of the 'prophet of Nazareth' as 'true God out of true God' rests on the authority of the Church, but it is the result of generations of discussion, and it is not without parallel elsewhere. The historian of religion learns that Christianity is not the only religion whose founder was first presented in human form and afterwards worshipped as divine. The person of Gotama the Buddha passed through a similar (though not identical) transformation.

It is well known that the founder of Buddhism repudiated all ontological conceptions, and de-

clined to envelop his ethical teachings in any metaphysical web. He would answer none of the catch-questions of contemporary sophists, and refused to affirm either that the world was eternal or that it had an origin in time, that it was infinite in extension or bounded in space. So he explained life without the hypothesis of a soul, the universe without the need of Cause or God. He himself died the death of man, and passed away leaving no trace behind. His followers might reverently commemorate the chief incidents of his career; they might make pious pilgrimages to the spots hallowed by his birth or his attainment of supreme wisdom. But they never approached him in prayer, or sought of him guidance or strength. The disciple might obey his words, and imitate afar off his example. But he offered him no worship, and entered into no communion with the author and finisher of his faith. Had not the Teacher said 'Live, mendicants, as lamps to yourselves, as a refuge to yourselves; with the Truth as your lamp and the Truth as your refuge and no other'?<sup>1</sup> Some three centuries or more, however, after the Buddha's death

<sup>1</sup> *Dīgha Nikāya*, vol. iii. p. 58.

a new type of Buddhism began to rise into view. The steps of its development cannot be indicated here. It must suffice to say that metaphysics demanded recognition on the side of philosophy, while religion sought for a living and permanent object for its affections; and under the influence of these two powerful impulses of thought and feeling the discarded ontology was reinstated in the centre of the new teaching, and the person of the Buddha was interpreted as a manifestation of the Infinite and Eternal, the Self-existent and the Absolute. Here was one who revealed himself from age to age, to meet the manifold needs of the ignorant and erring; who made himself known as the Father of all creatures, the Healer of their sicknesses and sins. On the basis of this new teaching vast masses of Scripture were compiled, and gigantic canonical collections gathered. Heroic missionary efforts carried the religion of revelation through Eastern Asia, till China, Tibet, Mongolia, Corea and Japan, had received the saving truth; for when the world's welfare was concerned, said an old chronicler, who could be idle or indifferent? Immense ecclesiastical institutions were founded; worship

was organized ; temples were built ; hymns and liturgies were composed ; poetry, philosophy, art, philanthropy, became the handmaids of faith ; and unnumbered millions have lived and died in devout gratitude to the Buddha who thus deigned to give himself again and again for the welfare and deliverance of the children of men. Here is a historical process analogous to that of Christianity among peoples far more numerous than those of the Roman empire. It expresses itself in forms of experience which in some cases bear astonishing resemblance to those of western Christianity.<sup>1</sup> They have every right to be regarded as genuine. The historian cannot mark off one set alone as true, and dismiss the other as the products of falsehood, folly, or fraud. He must examine both impartially ; and if the preconception of the uniqueness of Christianity prevents him from recognizing Buddhist values, he must not be surprised if the theologians of the East decline on similar grounds to admit the exclusive claims of those of the West.

<sup>1</sup> See an article by the present writer on ' Religion in the Far East, or Salvation by Faith : a Study in Japanese Buddhism,' in *The Quest*, April and July, 1910.

## (i)

The development of Christian speculation took place under the influence of two great groups of facts. Its foundation is to be sought, in the first place, in the experiences, beliefs, and hopes of the Church as recorded in the literature of the New Testament. These were shaped, in the second place, in an atmosphere of thought and life where many currents mingled, and Jewish elements were blended with the manifold types presented by Egyptian, Greek, and West Asiatic cults. Even the Christian Scriptures themselves presuppose a very varied background of ideas; and the labours of the last thirty years have brought much new light to bear both on the Judaism out of which Christianity emerged, and the panorama of faiths and philosophies by which it was immediately surrounded. Old books have been re-studied and are better understood; books hitherto unknown have been discovered; contemporary religions have been investigated; and the student is beginning to trace the effects of their contact and influence in the Jewish and the Christian fields.

Under these influences the traditional ideas of



Jewish monotheism have been seriously modified. The simple but profound relations between man and God which are presented in the teachings of Jesus, and are reflected (though with less force and vividness) in the oldest elements of the Jewish liturgy, stand out in front of a manifold variety of powers both good and evil, which peopled the worlds above and below. Seven heavens,<sup>1</sup> it was believed, rose above the earth beyond the firmament, corresponding to the Babylonian system founded on the sun, moon, and five planets. For a universe conceived on this more elaborate scale new series of inhabitants must be provided. As Enoch is conducted to the first heaven, he sees there the rulers of the orders of the stars, the angels who guard the treasuries of ice and snow, of cloud and dew. Jewish imagination placed angels or spirits behind hail and hoar-frost, behind wind and thunder, behind cold and heat, even behind the changing seasons, with a vigorous animism delightful to the anthropologist. In

<sup>1</sup> The material in this and the following paragraphs in this section is reproduced (by the kind permission of the Editor of the Hibbert Journal) from the writer's article in the *Hibbert Journal Supplement*, 1909, 'Jesus or Christ,' p. 227, where detailed references will be found.

the upper worlds were innumerable ranks of loftier beings of mingled good and ill, the thrones and lordships, the principalities, authorities, and powers, so often named by the Apostle Paul. Those that were hostile or rebellious against the establishment of the rule of God, it would be the task of the Messiah to overcome and bring to naught, among them being the 'rulers of this world' who had been the real agents of the crucifixion ; and when they came up for judgment the followers of the Messiah would join in their condemnation at the great assize.<sup>1</sup>

Here, too, were the celestial counterparts of the sacred localities of earth ; the Paradise (in the third heaven) into which the Apostle Paul believed himself to have been caught up ; the Jerusalem which is above, which was shown to Adam, to Abraham, and Moses, and was seen in the visions of the Apocalypse descending from the sky. And there, likewise, in the fourth heaven, was the altar where Michael, prince-angel of the people of Israel, served as heavenly high-priest, and acted as advocate and intercessor for the nation. Exalted indeed was his personality.

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Cor.* vi. 3.

He was one of the four great Angels of the Presence. He bore in his hand the oath which governed creation and directed the worlds. He had been Israel's guide amid the vicissitudes of its history. Through him had the Law been given to Moses, so that he was designated as 'the Mediator between God and man.'<sup>1</sup> He led the people through the wilderness, and intervened, sometimes successfully and sometimes ineffectually, at the crises of its fate. Later imagination credited him with having arrested the attack of Sennacherib, but supposed that he had failed to persuade the Almighty to save Israel from Nebuchadrezzar. He contended with Sammael for the body of Moses, and would finally lead the angelic hosts to battle with the great dragon, whom he would overthrow like the Messiah with whom he had so much in common. That such a being should be invoked in distress was natural. Even the New Testament has its warnings against angel-worship; and the Synagogue found it necessary to enjoin that 'when a man is in need he must pray directly to God, and neither to Michael nor to Gabriel.'

Many dim forms pass through the mazes of

<sup>1</sup> *Test. XII Patriarchs*, 'Dan.' vi. Cp. *Gal.* iii. 19.

later Jewish literature ; the sacramental Presence or Shekhinah, which had brooded over the Sanctuary ; the Metatron, sometimes the symbol of the divine sovereignty over the world, the representative of both orders of God's powers, the intellectual and the active ; the Memra or Word which again and again in the Targums takes the place of the divine form in intercourse with the patriarchs ; the Power and the Wisdom of God, which the Apostle Paul afterwards saw impersonated in Christ ; with other attributes like Judgment and Mercy capable of half independent action—obscure and elusive figures to which it is by no means always clear how much of separate existence is to be ascribed. Some objects are caught up into a realm of being which is variously interpreted as purely ideal, belonging only to the thought of God, or as possessed of some kind of reality in the spheres above. Such were the heavenly Law, comprising the sum of intellectual relations constituting possible universes into which God looked when he would create the world, the throne of glory, the Patriarchs, Israel, the sanctuary, and Messiah's name (equivalent in the philosophy

of an older day to his personality or essence). In the *Assumption of Moses* (assigned by Dr. Charles to the beginning of our era) Moses is said to have been created before the world, and mysteriously reserved as a future instrument of the divine purpose. So it is not surprising that the radiant form of the Son of Man, identified in the Book of Enoch with the Messiah, should be presented as brought into being before sun and stars (*ante*, p. 71). Strange, indeed, were the conceptions of the first man, and stranger still the arguments by which they were supported. From a perversion of *Ps. cxxxix. 5*, interpreted as 'thou hast formed me behind and before,' it was inferred that he was created in spirit before the first day, and in actual body as Adam after the last day of creation. A bold equation of the spirit which moved on the face of the waters then served to connect the Messiah with the first man, whose appearance is elsewhere described as like a second angel in an honourable, great and glorious way. Moreover, it was part of ancient tradition that superhuman persons should appear on earth as men. Imagination suffered from no scientific restraint in



conceiving such transformations. When Gabriel brought to Mary the great announcement of her future motherhood, he doubtless laid aside his heavenly glory, just as in the Christian portion of the *Ascension of Isaiah* the Lord is instructed after quitting the sixth heaven to assume the likeness of the angels of each successively lower region till he reaches the angels of the air, and thus passes to earth to become incarnate without attracting any notice. Popular anticipation looked for a Messiah from the Davidic line. Here, then, were all the elements for a doctrine of 'descent,' resembling the *avatāras* of Indian theology. Just as the future Buddha would leave his home in the Tusita heaven to be born of a woman upon earth 'for the good, the gain, and the welfare of gods and men,' so must the Messiah-to-be quit the scene of supernal glory to enter the ranks of humanity so as to become the deliverer of Israel, and return to the celestial sphere to accomplish the victory over the powers of evil. The elements of a Christology were thus all prepared. They needed only a personality to which they could be attached.

## (ii)

The public ministry of Jesus, though it culminated in his appearance at Jerusalem as the Messiah, afforded no opportunity at first of interpreting his career in connexion with these exalted characters. But the conviction of the disciples that death could not hold him, and that he had been exalted to the seat at God's right hand (*Ps. cx. 1*), provided an adequate occasion. To this Peter appeals on the day of Pentecost to support his declaration that 'God hath made him both Lord and Christ' (*Acts ii. 36*); while Paul tells the Romans that while he was of the seed of David according to the flesh, he was defined as Son of God by the resurrection (*Rom. i. 4*). There was the proof of what constituted for Paul one of the chief features of his Gospel, namely, that God would judge the world through him (*Rom. ii. 16*). Steeped in contemporary eschatology, the apostle had already, no doubt, before his conversion, his own ideas of what the Messiah would be. The scope and application of the term 'son of God' are, indeed, not wholly clear. It is the name of a class, in ancient Hebrew poetry, the angel-powers who shared in creation's joy (*Job xxxviii. 7*). It is

part of the prophetic promise to the Davidic king, 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son' (2 *Sam.* vii. 14). It is the dignity of the Anointed (Messiah), newly enthroned upon the holy hill, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee' (*Ps.* ii. 7). When the high-priest will extort from his prisoner a confession which will secure sentence of death, he asks him 'Art thou the son of the Blessed?' (*Mark* xiv. 61). In endeavouring to determine when this function began, one line of Christian tradition fixed on the baptism as the moment when Jesus was invested with this dignity. The well-known reading of the Cambridge Codex D, which reports the heavenly utterance (*Luke* iii. 22) in the words 'Thou art my son, I this day have begotten thee,' points to the early identification of Jesus with the Messianic figure of the second Psalm; while the apostle Paul is related to have applied the same passage to the resurrection in his address at Antioch in Pisidia (*Acts* xiii. 33).

But the student of the Pauline letters soon discovers that this title has for their author a higher meaning than that of official rank and theocratic dignity. It was not an honour con-

ferred by a kind of adoption, it belonged to him by nature. When he entered the earthly scene he was already in a special manner God's 'own' son (*Rom.* viii. 32). Vague and undetermined, indeed, are the apostle's references to the pre-human condition of the Messiah. He appears to have belonged to the world above; in some sense he preceded creation itself, since he was the actual agent of its production (*1 Cor.* viii. 6). But he was nevertheless man, the man 'from heaven,'<sup>1</sup> who had quitted the glory and liberty of his celestial state to wear the humanity of David's line and submit himself to the bondage of the Jewish law (*Phil.* ii. 6ff.). That which filled the apostle with wonder and adoring passion was the thought that this being, once radiant in light, had condescended to die upon the cross. The love of the Father in sending forth his Son, and the love of the Son in thus giving himself for man, awoke an enthusiastic devotion which carried the great missionary through every peril from Damascus to Rome. The splendour surrendered

<sup>1</sup> *1 Cor.* xv. 47. Paul does not actually use the title 'Son of Man,' but his allusion to *Ps.* viii. in *1 Cor.* xv. 27 shows that he was well acquainted with it.

by descending into our mortality was resumed when God, after his obedience to death, exalted him to place and power above every name. It would seem, however, that the function to which he was thus elevated, that of 'Lord,' implying his sovereignty over the whole of creation, carried with it a rank which he had not possessed before. The conception was derived from *Ps. cx. 1* (originally composed, according to a widely received view, in honour of the Asmonean priest-prince Simon, 143-135 B.C.). The title was frequently used in the language of the Greek and oriental cults.<sup>1</sup> It was the name of a special class of angels, the 'lordships' (R.V., dominions) of *Col. i. 16* and the *Secrets of Enoch*, xx. 1. When Paul, therefore, affirms that while there are gods many and lords many, Christians recognize only one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ (*1 Cor. viii. 6*), he at once draws a distinction between their respective spheres of being, power, and agency, while he also raises the exalted Messiah above every other superhuman rank. That is the honour earned by his submission to the Father's purpose.

<sup>1</sup> For example, of Apollo, Asklepios, Serapis, Zeus, and many another, in Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece.



It is, therefore, the supreme term of the disciple's confession (*Rom. x. 9*), which does not consist in declaring that he is Son of God (still less, 'God the Son'), but in accepting him as Lord. 'One God the Father' and 'one Lord Jesus Christ' are thus the earliest terms of the Pauline creed, the first being further defined as the God of the second (*Eph. i. 17*).

The post-human life of the Messiah was thus of far higher significance for the Apostle than his pre-natal existence. In the strange series of headships, woman, man, Christ, God (*1 Cor. xi. 3*), Christ occupies an intermediary place between the mortals of earth and the Creator. But in connexion with the Church he is presented in varying figures, now as the body, now as the head, and again, with one of the unexpected turns which put all system-builders to rout, he is identified with the Spirit (*2 Cor. iii. 17*). Language is strained to the uttermost to express the intimacy of the relation. The believer is in Christ, and he is also in the Spirit; but the terms can be inverted, and Christ and the Spirit are each in the believer. So as the dispenser of gifts and graces, and judge in the great assize which closed the immediate prospect of the world's

history, his relations to man were of more importance than those to nature. If, like Wisdom, or the Son of Man in the Enoch-Similitudes, he had existed before sun and stars, and helped to bring creation into being, as Son of Man he should also subject all the hostile powers, and the faithful should be in some way associated with him in sovereignty and judgment. But as God was the ultimate fount of all existence, and the source of all creation, so likewise he is the goal to which all things tend and in which all shall at length fulfil their Maker's purpose. When in the last great conflict even death itself has been brought to naught, and the victory of the Son is complete, he will resign the powers entrusted to him, give back the authority by which he reigned, and submit himself beneath the Father's rule, that God may be all in all (1 *Cor.* xv. 28). In the world of the redeemed his task is over, and the Father is supreme.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the face of these and other facts it seems impossible to believe that the apostle could have intended to identify the Messiah with 'God blessed for ever' (*Rom.* ix. 5). As he elsewhere applies this adjective only to 'the God and Father of the (our) Lord Jesus (Christ)' (2 *Cor.* i. 3, xi. 31; *Eph.* i. 3), and to the Creator (*Rom.* i. 25), I cannot think that

## (iii)

Among the different elements of the apostle's conception of Jesus two aspects were destined to important developments. As Christ or Messiah he had the function of king and judge. As the image of God, the instrument of creation, the principle in which all things subsist, the providential guide of Israel through the successive phases of history, he is the embodiment of the divine Wisdom and Power. These were in truth the attributes both of his royal and of his cosmic state; and they bring him very close to the Hellenistic Logos, intermediary between the Eternal Father and the world of our experience.

in this passage he departs from his usual practice. More than half a century ago Prof. Jowett pointed out that as the apostle nowhere else calls Jesus God it is extremely unlikely that he did so in this solitary passage. Had he so regarded him, he would have used the designation more frequently. The statement of *Col.* i. 19 that the Fulness was pleased to dwell in the Son, cannot identify him with Deity, as he is expressly called 'the first-born of creation.' Even in his pre-human state, therefore, he belonged to the order of created beings, preceding the rest of the powers and objects of the world. How this description of his incarnate life is to be reconciled with the theories of Kenosis, or the voluntary relinquishment of his omniscience and omnipotence (see chap. IV, §§ v. vi.), is not clear.

The first of these characters was naturally attached with special closeness to the apocalyptic scheme. The typical presentment of the Messiah's reign as Son of David (*Psalms of Solomon*, xvii.) does not transcend the limits of humanity, unless it be in the statement that he will be pure from sin. But from ancient times divinity had hedged the mighty monarchs of the East. The sovereigns of Egypt claimed in their inscriptions direct generation from on high, and the whole process was exhibited with startling realism on their temple walls. Rameses the Great before the days of Moses was described by his court-scribes as 'Son of Ra,<sup>1</sup> giver of everlasting life.' 'Heaven,' they boldly asserted, 'rejoiced at his birth. The gods said "We have brought him up (or begotten him)."' The goddesses said "He was born of us to be the leader of the kingdom of Ra." Amon<sup>2</sup> said "I am he who made him. I seated truth in her place. For his sake the earth is established, the heavens satisfied, the gods contented, Rameses the daily giver of everlasting life, like his father Ra."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The visible solar orb. The syllable *mes* means 'son.'

<sup>2</sup> The great hidden God of Thebes.

<sup>3</sup> Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894), p. 57.

The language of Babylonia was couched in different style, but implicitly contained a cognate idea. Sargon prefixes the sign of deity to his name; Naramsin is repeatedly designated in his inscriptions 'God of Akkad.' This is not identical with the innate deity of the Pharaohs, it is the expression of universal sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> It is even possible that the address to the sovereign in the wedding hymn, *Ps. xlv.*—'Thy throne, O God (Hebrew *Elohim*), is for ever and ever'—is to be explained from similar court-homage. After the days of Alexander the Great like titles are employed by Greeks. As early as 307 B.C., Demetrius and his father Antigonus, who liberated Athens from the tyranny of Cassander, were hailed by grateful citizens as 'saviour gods,' and Demetrius was provided with divine parentage through Poseidon and Aphrodite.<sup>2</sup> In the Syrian house of Seleucus, Antiochus took the title of Theos (god), and his son added the epithet Epiphanes, 'god manifest.' On the Rosetta stone

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, 2nd ed., 1909 (2nd part), p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> See the contemporary hymn translated by Frazer, *Early History of the Kingship*, p. 146.



Ptolemy V, 205 B.C., claims the same divine character; he is, moreover, 'eternal-lived,' and the 'living image of Zeus.' Julius Cæsar was designated 'god manifest' at Ephesus, and the 'common saviour of human life.' The exalted language of the cities of Asia Minor concerning the Emperor Augustus has been already quoted.<sup>1</sup> Was it surprising that a tale should be early circulated describing a prodigy before his birth, which was understood to portend that Nature would bring forth a king for the Roman people? The terrified senate, his freedman Marathus related, promptly issued a decree enjoining the slaughter of all children born that year! To him, also, were applied the titles 'lord,' 'saviour,' and 'son of God,' and the day of his birth was the beginning of 'good tidings' (gospels) for the world.

A whole religious vocabulary was thus in existence to describe the prerogatives of sovereignty, and the Christian naturally applied its terms to the sublime kingship of the Messiah. He was the head of the citizenship of the saints, and the attributes of empire all belonged to him. This is

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 46.

accordingly one of the leading themes of the Apocalypse. Fierce is the wrath which this book expresses against Rome, her idolatries, and her persecutions. Strange is the contrast between the picture drawn by historians at the end of the first century of our era, and that sketched by the seer of Revelation. On the one hand Rome is the author of peace from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic, from the cataracts of the Nile to the Tyne. She is the giver of equal laws, the guardian of civic welfare, the promoter of education, the nurse of commerce, the protector of trade, the patron of the arts. But the Christian prophet cares for none of these things. Of what use are the great roads that knit the peoples of the empire together ; of what use the safety of fleets and argosies which no pirate can touch ; of what use the wealth gathered from all parts of the earth ; of what use the tributes of kings whom she has dragged into her harlotries : she is the persecutor of prophets, she reeks with the blood of the saints ; the unhallowed worship of her emperor identifies her power with Satan's, and nothing can avert her doom. Using the symbols of ancient Babylonian mythology in which the

dragon of the deep was overcome by the might of the god of light, the seer, in a succession of strangely confused and frequently incoherent scenes, depicts the overthrow of the greatest empire the world had known. The struggle is waged partly on earth, and partly in the world above. On one side are arrayed the whole forces of evil, human and diabolic. On the other is the conquering Christ. The victory must lie with God's Messiah. But when his task was appointed on this cosmic scale, the person of the victor must be conceived to match. So he is more than the 'lion of the tribe of Judah' or 'the root of David.' As he rides forth on his white horse to the holy war he bears upon his cloak and on his thigh the august title 'King of kings and Lord of lords' (*Rev.* xix. 16). And though he was dead, yet he now lives for ever, and can describe himself as the first and last, the beginning and the end (xxii. 13), as if all existence were summed up in him no less than in the Almighty himself. The elevation of the divine king can go no further; and it is not without surprise that we also read (xix. 13)—is it a later editorial gloss?—'And his name is called the Word of God.'

(iv)

‘In the beginning was the Word ; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’<sup>1</sup>

So runs the solemn opening of the Fourth Gospel. When Christianity was carried by the apostle Paul and the earliest band of Christian missionaries to city after city round the Mediterranean, they found hearers among the thoughtful and educated Greek-speaking people who had been attracted to Judaism by its monotheistic doctrine and simple unsacrificial worship. They were described in early Christian literature as the ‘God-fearers.’ Great cities like Alexandria, Tarsus, Ephesus, were the meeting-places of all kinds of beliefs, and centres of religious and philosophical culture. Community of government, the spread of the Greek language, commercial intercourse, facilities of travel, helped to diffuse new ideas ; and it soon became necessary for the Church, in addressing itself to fresh modes of thought, to tell the story of its Founder in different

<sup>1</sup> The English language here fails to convey the distinction of the Greek between the intimate relation of the Word ‘towards *the* God,’ and its own nature as God, i.e. little more than divine.

terms from those of primitive Palestinian tradition. To minds trained in the Hellenic view of the order of nature, the framework of Jewish eschatology in which the life and teaching of Jesus were first set, was not congenial. It was needful, therefore, to reinterpret its main conceptions ; and provide them with forms which would appeal to another type of experience. This was the work accomplished by the Fourth Evangelist. For him, as for Peter, Jesus was the Messiah ; for him, as for Paul, he was the Son of God. But this august character did not wait for definitive proof till the resurrection. It must have been continually manifested in word and deed throughout the months and years from the Baptist's testimony to the cross. Paul had presented a figure which involved the descent of a heavenly being to earth, though that mysterious personality was a celestial Man. But of his human life the Apostle found so little occasion to write, that it has been actually doubted whether he knew anything of it before its close. At any rate he never undertook the formal task of picturing his ministry. Christ sent him, he might have said, in the language of a later day, not to write *a* gospel but to preach



*the* gospel. Even the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was content to set two aspects side by side in impressive contrast, without attempting to reconcile or combine them,—the divine Son, the express image of God's person, sustaining creation by his utterance of power, and the historic Jesus who learned obedience, who was made perfect by suffering, and only through strong crying and tears won his way to self-surrender and to victory. The Fourth Evangelist, however, boldly essayed the task, and for the benefit of his readers defined his purpose as he ended, 'These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye may have life in his name.'<sup>1</sup>

The determining idea, then, in the writer's mind is 'Son of God,' and the real function of the Christ in that character is to reveal the Father. The problem is to adapt the Synoptic tradition,

<sup>1</sup> *John* xx. 31. The last chapter is an appendix, whether by the hand of the Evangelist or by another is still disputed. It is not necessary any longer to argue that whoever the Evangelist may have been and whatever sources he may have had besides the Synoptic narratives, his presentation includes what is conveniently called a very large 'subjective element.'

from which the author starts, to the advanced conception of 'the Son.' On the one hand Jesus frankly describes himself as 'a man that hath told you the truth which I heard from God' (viii. 40). He comes out of Nazareth; and the paternity of Joseph is emphasized (vi. 42). When the objection is raised that the Messiah should be of David's seed and spring from David's home, it is noteworthy that there is no reference to the genealogies or the birth-stories in the earlier gospels. But this is not due to the emphasis on birth from above, or birth out of God, for this is not inconsistent with human parentage, any more than origin out of the devil in the case of the opposing Jews. Jesus shares the bodily needs of a man, and in contrast with the heretical view that he had only worn a phantom form stress is laid upon his incidental weariness, his thirst, his tears. He possesses the life which rises out of the bodily frame, and which (like the good shepherd for his sheep) he lays down for his friends (x. 11, xv. 13). This same life (*psychê*) has its higher conscious aspects, and in the contemplation of death can be distraught (xii. 27, 'soul' = *psychê*), yet he cannot pray, like the

synoptic Jesus, 'not my will, but thine be done,' for he has strictly speaking no will of his own: he has not descended from heaven to do his own will; of himself he can do nothing; he is but the instrument of the Father who has sent him (vi. 38, v. 19, viii. 28); a conflict is impossible, 'I do *always* the things that are pleasing to him' (viii. 29). So the temptation at the opening of his career has no longer any meaning, and is dropped; and the anguish of Gethsemane is replaced by a serene majesty which overawes his captors—no mob of untrained servants, but a Roman cohort of disciplined soldiers—and flings them in a mass upon the ground. Yet upon the cross he really suffers, and at death he yields up his spirit (*pneuma*, cp. *Matt.* xxvii. 50; *Luke* xxiii. 46). Here are once more the characteristics of a human person, too firmly lodged in tradition to be ignored.

But on the other hand these are blended with others which point clearly to a heavenly origin and constitution. Difficult, indeed, is the interpreter's task, no less than the writer's. His phrases, couched in the utmost simplicity of words, seem alternately to expand and contract, and carry a range of meanings which it is never easy

to define. On the side of Christian experience a series of parallels is drawn between the disciple and the teacher in the two cognate works, the Gospel and the First Letter. The believer, no less than the Messiah himself, is born out of God. He, too, cannot sin (1 *John* iii. 9). He, too, has passed from death to life (iii. 14). He, too, can lay down his life for the brethren (iii. 16). He, too, has overcome the Evil One (ii. 13), and when his Lord is in the heavenly home he does even greater works in opening blind eyes to the truth, and raising the dead out of trespasses and sins (*John* xiv. 12). But this, after all, implies no real equality of being. For the Son has descended from the celestial splendour which he shared with the Father ere the world was made. His being was not indeed absolute or self-existent, it was bestowed upon him by the Father, and is apparently identified in one passage with the precosmic Son of Man (vi. 62) of earlier speculation. But that was in the timeless depths of eternity, so that he is presented in contrast to the historic process of Abraham's birth as the continuous 'I am' (viii. 58). There in the supersensual world he lived as spirit like God himself, participating

in the Father's life of ceaseless activity and love. In this august self-communication to the Son there was no reserve ; the Son was consequently empowered to make a full disclosure of the Father's words and works. As the Father is light, so also is the Son ; and, as light is the symbol of truth, the Son is also the truth. The substance of his utterance has been heard from the Father : he can only speak what he has been taught (viii. 28), and this teaching is a constant inflow from a divine source. It is even described as the Father's word (*logos*), which Jesus expressly declares is not his own (xiv. 24). The Sonship thus portrayed is unique in kind. The Fourth Evangelist does not use the Synoptic expressions such as 'blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God,' 'that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven.' Paul had not yet found it necessary to mark off the sonship of Christ from that of the believer led by the spirit of God (*Rom.* viii. 14). But the Fourth Evangelist will allow no such parallel with the Only-begotten,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was also a term of the earlier Orphic theology. It was applied to the deity of mysteries, especially to Korê (the Maid), and also to Demeter, Athena, and Hekatê.



and applies to the disciple the less intimate designation 'child.' For the union of the Father and the Son is so close that they are but one (x. 30), where our language fails to convey the distinction (in the Greek) between the masculine of personality and the impersonal neuter.

Is this union conceived as simply moral, arising out of harmony of will, or has it any transcendental or metaphysical quality? Like so many other questions concerning the Fourth Gospel, this is more easily asked than answered. On the one side are those lofty assurances that the Son alone knows the Father, and so to know Christ is to know God. The relation between them is so intimate that each is in the other, the Father has no secrets from the Son, and the Son can do and say nothing of himself. Their reciprocal knowledge and mutual inherence seem only explicable through some community of nature; and the Son, though he expressly affirms the superior greatness of the Father (xiv. 28), is nevertheless in some high sense a partner in the divine life. But on the other hand the unity of the believers is expressed in similar terms. Not only are they to be one with each other, they

are also to be one in the Father and the Son ; God in Christ, and Christ in the disciples, as though the inherence of the Father were mediated through the Son (xiv. 20, xvii. 11, 21-23). Yet, once more, the transcendence of the Son is implied at the close of this prayer of consecration, for though the Father's love is conditioned by his obedience, it really belongs to the timeless order, and began before the foundation of the world. Manifold, indeed, are the contradictions which result from the attempt to picture on the scale of humanity a being who was intrinsically divine.

These incongruities are in no way relieved by the philosophical conception which the author calls to his aid in the prologue. The doctrine of the Logos or Word had a long history behind it, and from the days of Heraclitus of Ephesus in the sixth century B.C.<sup>1</sup> it had played a part in various Greek Schools. Founding himself partly on Plato and partly on the Stoics, Philo of Alexandria had employed it as a means for reconciling the ancient Hebrew scriptures with Hellenic culture. The prophets and singers of Israel

<sup>1</sup> Known as 'the Obscure.'

had never speculated on metaphysical problems. Their conception of creation rested on the image of divine power. 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' 'He spake and it was done.' Further back than speech they did not go in the analysis of God's productive might. Utterance for them was creation. But the reflective Greek enquired what lay behind speech, and the reply immediately was 'thought.' Even the carpenter who makes a table must have some idea of its shape and size, its height, its surface, and its legs. The sculptor who released an Athena from the marble in which she lay embedded till he set her free, must first have seen with the mind's eye her imprisoned form. In laying out a city, argued Philo, the architect does not proceed haphazard ; he has a plan which shows already the sites of market-place and quay, temple and senate-house. Even so in bringing a universe into being the Deity must have conceived it first as an intellectual whole, whose ordered parts constituted a mighty sum of inter-connected thoughts. To this totality Philo gave the name of Logos, Reason or Word. A long series of problems was immediately started. What was the relation of this Logos to God on

the one hand, and on the other to the kinds or types of classes in which the objects of nature might be arranged? The artist who has ever reflected on the rise of a design, the poet who has watched the birth of song, knows how feelings are wedded with ideas, and gradually take shape within the mind till that which was inarticulate has gained expression, and the inner impulse has received outward form. In the mind of God, where Philo, greatly daring, strove to picture a like process on the scale of creation, there thus arose a thought which comprehended all possible dependent being. It contained within itself implicitly a miniature of the entire world, or rather, since space dimensions could not properly be ascribed to ideas, it provided the intellectual forms which manifested themselves in the genera and species of the heaven and earth we know. The Logos thus embraced all parts and processes of visible things, on which it impressed their proper characters, marking them off from each other, and at the same time uniting them together in the reasoned order of the whole. It was thus the agent in the production of sun and star, of earth and sea, and every living thing, and served

as mediator between the One fount of existence raised in sublime immutability above all change, and the growth and decay which make the vicissitudes of our experience. Generated within the Infinite and Eternal, it might be called 'the second God,' or 'God not in the proper sense,' in distinction from the real or true God. Of the mode of its conception no mortal tongue could tell, but as the offspring of Deity it might be termed the 'first-born' or 'eldest son of God.'

The Logos which appeared in the visible scene as the intellectual bond knitting all created things into one whole of thought, might enter likewise into relations with humanity. It appeared in Abraham as the representative of divine wisdom, in Moses as the prophet, in Aaron as the high-priest. The patriarchal histories related in *Genesis* were thus resolved in Philo's hands into a series of allegories and types. The real world was above, where dwelt the ideal realities of our world of sense. Noteworthy, for instance, was the symbolism of the high-priest's robes in connexion with the service of the tabernacle, of which Moses had beheld the pattern on the mount. The dwelling prepared for the Father and Ruler



of the world must typify in its parts and arrangements the universe itself. So the seven-branched candlestick represented the seven heavens of the sun, moon, and five planets, while the altar of incense was the emblem of the earth. The robes of the high-priest received a similar interpretation, with the remarkable explanation 'that whenever he enters the temple to offer up the prayers and sacrifices in use among his nation, all the world may likewise enter in with him by means of the imitation of it which he bears about him.'<sup>1</sup> Fanciful, indeed, were the identifications. The vestment reaching to the feet typified the ambient air; the flowery hem, the earth; the scarlet dye, fire; the twelve stones upon the breast, the Logos which holds together and regulates the universe. So garbed, the high-priest would be reminded to make his life worthy of the world, and the whole world would co-operate with him in the sacred rite, and the Son (i.e., the world) would thus be brought to the service of his Begetter, and in the exalted character of the Paraclete or Advocate

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Moses*, iii. § 14; *On the Monarchy*, ii. § 5-6. Compare the identification of the great high-priest with the Logos in the book of *The Migration of Abraham*, § 18.

(R.V., 'Comforter,' *John* xiv. 16, 1 *John* ii. 1) would even make for forgiveness of sins and abundance of freely given blessings. In such language as this lie divers anticipations of the ideas of the Fourth Gospel. The Evangelist transfers them from the world, conceived as Son of God, to Jesus; and a living person, rather than an interconnected scheme of things, becomes the vital expression of the Father's Mind.

Philo, however, was not the only religious teacher of the first century of our era who employed the conception of the Logos to express the process of God's revelation to man. In the literature which has come down to us from the later stages of Gentile mysticism there is a strange series of books grouped under the general name of Hermes the Thrice-Great. The Greek Hermes was the accepted representative of the Egyptian Thoth, though the latter deity in many ways transcended his Greek equivalent. For Thoth became one of the most interesting figures in the higher Egyptian theology. He was the impersonation of law in both the physical and moral worlds. In his latter capacity he acted as the recording scribe at the weighing of the soul after

death in the Hall of the Two Truths. He possessed the knowledge of divine speech, and was the god of Reason and Revelation. His will kept the forces of heaven and earth in equilibrium; he was the representative of the hidden Mind in all things, and the guardian of the institutions of society, in which intelligence was allied with righteous order. It is possible that some of the mystical elements prominent in the Hermetic books may have been derived from Egyptian teaching in which Thoth was thus a prominent figure. Here, at any rate, are the same antitheses between<sup>1</sup> light and darkness, life and death, which meet us in the Fourth Gospel. They are grouped around the figure of Hermes, who, with lamb or ram upon his shoulders, served as the type of the Good Shepherd for the earliest representations of Christian art. In the *Poimandres* or 'Shepherd of Men,' assigned by Reitzenstein to the end of the first century of our era, but believed to be entirely independent of Christian influence, phrase after phrase recalls the language of the Fourth Gospel. Consider such words of prayer as these<sup>1</sup>: 'Holy art thou, O God, father of the universe! Holy

<sup>1</sup> *Poimandres*, § 31, trans. by Mr. G. R. S. Mead.

art thou whose will is perfected by its own powers. Holy art thou who willest to be known, and art known by thine own. Holy art thou who didst by the Word make to consist all things that are. Empower me and fill me with this grace, that I may enlighten those who are in ignorance of their origin, my brethren and thy sons, wherefore I believe and bear witness, I go to life and light.'

Here are traces of a mode of thought which was probably widely spread in Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. Some of the language in the recently discovered *Odes of Solomon* seems to approach it; e.g. in xii. 11, 'the dwelling-place of the Word is man, and its truth is love.' The Fourth Evangelist employs it for the expression of Christian truth. It may indeed be doubted how far the author intended it to be the determining element in the conception of the person of Jesus. Introduced with a solemn parallel to the story of the creation, the Logos has no sooner become flesh in Christ than it passes from the scene. Jesus never refers to it as the occupant of his own frame. He does indeed rebuke the Jews who have not his Logos dwelling in them (*John* viii. 37); just as the

author of the First Letter writes to the young men because they are strong, and God's Logos abides in them (1 *John* ii. 14). But if he speaks of his own Logos it is not with reference to his divine nature, but to his teaching; this is the norm or standard which shall judge men at the last day (*John* xii. 48); and it is not really his own, it belongs to the Father who sent him (xiv. 24). The 'word' is thus a term of marked elasticity; and as the exalted use of it does not reappear in the Gospel, it would not seem essential to the writer's view. It is in fact wholly inconsistent with a very important feature in his scheme. It was the function of the Messiah to vanquish the Adversary or Opposer, who is described by the Fourth Evangelist as the 'Prince of this world.' But if the universe is created and upheld by the Logos, if every man coming into the world shares its light, there is no place for the devil. Philo, accordingly, never introduces Satan into human life. The hostile Jews, however, in the Fourth Gospel, are represented as his offspring (viii. 44); they belong to the realm of darkness, falsehood, and death. What, then, has become of the immanence of the Logos? Once more, we are



confronted with different modes of thought. The dramatic conception of a conflict with the ruler of this world in which the Messiah vanquishes his foe, is incongruous with the philosophy of the Logos. The world of the Jew could not be combined with that of the Greek, and fresh proof is found that the introduction of the Word is after all subordinate and not essential in the writer's thought.

It remains to ask how was the Logos united with the person of Jesus of Nazareth. When the Word became flesh, did it also become Man? The question is beset with difficulty. When the Evangelist describes it as knit in timeless fellowship with God, does he conceive it in terms of distinct personality, or is it only the supreme expression of the reason in creative thought, and the energy in creative thinking, where thought is action, and thoughts become things? In the Philonic philosophy the Logos, as Dr. Drummond has happily said, was 'personal, but not a person.' It impresses itself with different characteristics on different human representatives, wisdom in one, prophecy in another, but there is no suggestion of the presence of a transcendent personality in

Abraham or Moses. When Wisdom fixed its 'tabernacle' in Jacob (*Ecclus.* xxiv. 8), it was, so to speak, embooked in Israel's law (ver. 23) : and when the Word 'tabernacled among us,' it was enfleshed in Jesus. Did this mean more than that the divine idea of truth and righteousness and love—of all that we imagine to constitute the character of God—was planted as a seed within a human form, so that the growth of the one in wisdom should match the growth in stature of the other ? In that case Jesus presented the divine life to men within the limits of our moral experience ; and the union in which he lived with God was a harmony of affection and of will. This is to explain the Sonship in terms of *character*.

The Church, however, adopted a contrary interpretation. In the 'only begotten Son' it saw a conscious personality, dowered with a separate though dependent existence by the Father's love. When this was identified with the Logos, the Word also attained this distinct being. It was no longer God's own Reason acting within the Infinite Mind ; it was projected into the field of the external world, and was finally concentrated into Christ. This led to the

identification of the Son with the Father in terms of *substance*. But how and when did the Word unite with the flesh of Jesus? Did the divine Logos only 'play the part of soul to a human body'?<sup>1</sup> The Evangelist subsequently attributes to him, as we have seen, both 'soul' (or 'life,' *psychê*) and 'spirit' (*pneuma*). Were there, then, four constituents of his person, flesh, life, spirit, and Logos? Surely there is here another indication of the imperfect connexion of the Logos theory with the actual delineation of the person of Jesus on the basis of the Synoptic tradition. Another exponent of the Logos philosophy, who made no definite use of the Gospel, Justin the Martyr, solved the problem in the fashion of the modern critic by enumerating only three elements, body, life, and Logos,<sup>2</sup> omitting the term 'spirit.' The whole higher activity of thought and will, marked off by voluntary control from the ordinary experience or corporeal sense, was assigned to the divine visitant, who temporarily occupied the bodily frame. The difficulty reappeared again and again in the course of

<sup>1</sup> So Dr. Martineau, *Seat of Authority*, p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> *Second Apology*, x.

subsequent speculation. It arose from the fact that the Fourth Gospel was not a work of systematic theology. It was an attempt to recast a historic experience in a new form. It spoke the language of religion, not of psychology or of a creed.

But, it may be urged, the Evangelist surely had some conception of the time and mode of the Incarnation. His silence on the story of the birth of Jesus suggests that he did not imagine it to have been effected by a physical process in the Virgin's womb. On the other hand the ministry of Jesus was more than a solitary theophany of the Old Testament type, when Yahweh might present himself at Abraham's tent-door in a body specially assumed for the purpose, like Athena or Brahmā adopting temporarily a human form. The body of Jesus was no Docetic appearance; he tells Pilate that he had been born; the references to his mother and brothers clearly imply that he had shared from the outset in the family life. Was Mary, then, as later belief averred, the 'mother of God'? And was the unborn babe at the same time maintaining the order of the most ancient heavens? Such have been the inferences of theologians. But it would seem

that the Evangelist hints at another way. He shrank from presenting the Logos as subject to human birth, or involved in the development of child, youth, and man. That pre-natal union of the divine personality with the human was inconsistent with the descent of the spirit by which the Baptist recognized the Son of God. What need had the Incarnate Logos of that heavenly unction? The ascription of this vision to John (i. 33, 34) suggests that the Evangelist intended to indicate (by a reference to the primitive Synoptic tradition) that the entry of the Spirit into Jesus<sup>1</sup> was the Hebrew equivalent of the Hellenic incarnation of the Word. The Baptist added that the Spirit 'abode' upon him. It is the Johannine term of the closest spiritual fellowship: this was the beginning of the life-long presence of the heavenly Son in the person of the Nazarene. The theology of the first half of the second century affords more than one instance of failure to distinguish between Logos and Spirit as constituting the Son. 'God,' we are told by Hermas in the *Shepherd*,<sup>2</sup> 'made the holy pre-

<sup>1</sup> So all the best modern editors of *Mark* i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Similitudes*, v. 5, 6.



existent spirit that created every creature to dwell in the flesh which he chose,' and a variant of the text adds the affirmation 'the Son is the holy Spirit.' Justin the Martyr, who comes very near to identifying the Word, the Son, and the Old Testament spirit of prophecy, declares that the Spirit and Power of God (*Luke* i. 35) are no other than the Word who is God's first-born.<sup>1</sup> If this interpretation be correct,<sup>2</sup> the Son of God first enters the human scene when Jesus of Nazareth becomes the Messiah through the gift of the spirit without measure (*John* iii. 34) from above. It is in virtue of this endowment that Thomas can address him as 'my Lord and my God.'<sup>3</sup>

(v)

Many were the problems which were started by the Logos doctrine, and various were the solutions which were offered. Their detailed display

<sup>1</sup> *First Apology*, xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> So apparently Hermas in the *Shepherd*, and among moderns Hilgenfeld and Jean Réville, Pfeleiderer and Loisy.

<sup>3</sup> It is a contemporary contrast that the secretary of the emperor Domitian wrote in his master's name 'Dominus et deus meus.'

belongs to the history of the expanding Church. Engaged during the second century in a struggle for very existence with Gnosticism, the Church emerges triumphant with a sacred tradition, an episcopal authority, a collection of scriptures, and a rule of faith. But the creed which was hereafter to bear the name of the Apostles contains no mention of the Word.

Only slowly, it would seem, did the Fourth Gospel acquire general recognition, and meantime the conception of the Logos might be applied in different ways. Justin (born at Neapolis in Samaria, the ancient Shechem), who found in Christianity what philosophy had failed to give him, declared that Socrates was done to death for the same cause as the Christians,<sup>1</sup> and actually designated Christ as the Socrates of barbarians. The Word sent forth as God out of God was, as such, another or a second God, distinguished from the absolute Deity. So indefinite were both speculation and language that the Logos might be described indifferently as begotten or created, and called a 'work' or product. A little later, when our four Gospels are firmly established,

<sup>1</sup> Justin himself suffered martyrdom at Rome about 160 A.D.

Irenæus, who had been trained in Asia Minor and had listened to the saintly Polycarp in his youth, wrestles with heresy in the home which he had found at Lyons on the Rhone. Many of his phrases show the germs of future difficulties. 'The Father is the invisible of the Son, the Son is the visible of the Father,' as though they had no separate personality, but were only contrasted modes of the same being. When he pictures the Word and Wisdom (or the Spirit) as the two hands of God, the figure implies instruments rather than co-equal agents. More significant still was his endeavour to harmonize the representation of Jesus as tried and suffering with the continued presence and energy of the Logos. The Word must have 'rested,' he explained, or been quiescent during the temptation and on the cross. The fiery Tertullian (of Carthage), on the other hand, constructed his Christology in complete independence of the actual life of Jesus. The doctrine of one substance and three persons is coming into view, and Tertullian coins the word *Trinitas* to express it. But it is presented in a surprisingly crude form. *Ratio*, the hidden Reason, and *Sermo*, the uttered Word, both dwelt in God who

existed alone. The Father was the whole substance, and the Son a portion of it, Deity adapted to the world, no longer inaccessible and incomprehensible, a ray from the sun, a stream from the source, a stem from the root, 'light out of light.' From the human standpoint he was a Deity whom men could apprehend; from the divine he was subordinate and even temporary. For, in a formula which was to become famous as a watchword of heresy a century later, Tertullian affirmed that 'there was a time when there was neither sin nor Son to make the Lord either Judge or Father.' When, then, had the Son come into being? Tertullian knew the moment, when the Word went forth and God said 'Let there be light.' Begun at the origin of creation, his work would be completed when death should be destroyed, and the Son restored the 'monarchy' to the Father.

The Logos-Christology, however, did not pass unchallenged. There are traces of an obscure sect, once powerful, in Asia Minor, whose name *Alogi* implies their rejection of the whole scheme of Christian doctrine based upon it. Their criticism of the Fourth Gospel brought on them the charge

of 'word-hunting.' They pointed to the differences which marked it off from the other three, its altered order of events, its omission of some important facts and its insertion of others inconsistent with their predecessors ; they contrasted its doctrine of birth from above with *Mark's* account of the Jordan baptism. Even at Rome, between the years 211 and 217, the presbyter Gaius, whom the historian Eusebius describes as 'learned and orthodox,' wrote a book in which he raised objections both to the Gospel and the Apocalypse. The type of Christology which was thus suggested was widely spread through both East and West in the first half of the third century. It exhibited Jesus as a man, chosen by God, tested and found worthy, and so 'anointed with holy Spirit and with power' at his baptism. In virtue of his holiness he was adopted by God as his Son, and lived in the constant fulfilment of the heavenly will. This conception (sometimes called 'Adoptionist') shines through the *Shepherd* ascribed to Hermas at Rome, about 140 A.D., a work included in the New Testament in the famous manuscript discovered by Constantine Tischendorf at Mount Sinai. It held its ground for more than a hun-



dred years, having several important representatives in Rome, and gave occasion to the famous trial of Paul of Samosata in Syria in the year 269 A.D. Bishop of Antioch, one of the greatest cities in the East, popular preacher, and withal magistrate and city-treasurer, he combined the secular with the clerical life. Jesus, he asserted, had been truly man, but the Logos had inspired him from above and made him divine. The Word was in Christ what the apostle Paul called in the Christian 'the inner man.' It was the principle of thought which existed in God, was manifested in creation, and dwelt as a divine element in the reason and the will of all humanity. In Christ the union between God and man was morally complete. But it was a union not of substance but of disposition or character, through which God revealed himself for the salvation of the race. Political antagonism appears to have veiled itself under theological strife. Paul was protected by the powerful queen Zenobia, of Palmyra. Charges of heresy were at length brought against him, and a synod assembled at Antioch and condemned him. The citizens, however, defied the Syrian bishops, and maintained him for three years in

his chair. Only the fall of Zenobia led to his deposition. Urged by his episcopal judges, the emperor Aurelian deprived him of his see, announcing that no one should be bishop in the city who was not in accord with the bishops of Italy and Rome. Paul went into exile ; but the council which had found him guilty of heresy also declared that the Son was not *homo-ousios*—‘ of the same substance ’—with the Father.

Other influences, however, were steadily driving Christian doctrine in that direction. The constant growth of the Church and its conquests in various fields tended to enhance the greatness of its founder and its Lord. The speculations of philosophy, possible influences in Alexandria from the theology of the Nile, the relative ease with which Hellenic and Egyptian thought could admit doctrines of manifestation of a hidden essence and find some links between the One and the Many—all may have contributed to the great issue. The fundamental conception, common to the Jewish Philo and the Christian teachers Clement and Origen, was the simplicity and changelessness of the ultimate being of God. To connect this with the manifold character of the

world of our experience Philo had called in the help of the Logos. Clement of Alexandria (about 200 A.D.) builds upon the same foundation, and with the broadest outlook over Greek culture seeks to establish a philosophy of religion. But so nearly does he approach to the Gnostic view of the unreality of Christ's actual humanity that he supposes Jesus only to have taken food and drink out of condescension to men; and so distinct was the separation between the divine element and the flesh that the Word suffered no pain upon the cross.

It was, however, to Origen<sup>1</sup> that Christian theology owed the most important formative impulse for its development. With vast learning and unwearied industry he devoted himself alike to Biblical study, and to the elaboration of a far-reaching scheme of doctrine which supplied a basis for the later ecclesiastical dogmatics. In writings spread through a life of incessant activity it cannot be surprising that there should be incongruities and even contradictions. And there

<sup>1</sup> Born 185-6 A.D., he became in his eighteenth year the acting head of the Christian school at Alexandria. Died at Tyre, 253.

were elements in his teaching which orthodoxy could not permanently tolerate, such as the pre-existence of souls, or the final reunion of all creatures (including even the Devil) in the heavenly fellowship. But though these and other pious opinions exposed his writings to mutilation and his memory to condemnation, he nevertheless holds not only the leading place among the teachers of the third century, but a foremost position among the creative minds of the whole Church. Deeply imbued with the Neoplatonic conception of the immutability of God, he could not admit philosophically that God could ever have been without his Reason, or religiously that the Father could ever have been without a Son. That wisdom to which the Gospel had given the name of the Word, must have been ever with him. That there could ever have been a time when he did not possess his Son in the most intimate relationship, was inconceivable. But the Son was begotten by no single act. That would at once have brought him into the realm of succession, and assigned him to a specific date. The divine wisdom must have been for ever arising within the divine mind ; the reason of God must have

been everlasting as his thought ; but the ' generation ' which produced it was no solitary resolve, it was perpetually renewed and never ceased. In other words it was the result not of a particular volition but of an eternal process : ' The Father is for ever begetting him.' The Son thus ever rising within the Father's being was necessarily his image, partook of his immutability, and shared his substance (*homo-ousios*). He is always being begotten, ' one Lord, one out of one, God out of God.' As such he may be popularly called a second God. This involved the strong affirmation of the subordination of the Son ; and with a breach of his fundamental conception Origen can actually declare him ' other in substance than the Father,' and designate him as something created. So hard is it to preserve consistency at such lofty levels. When he carried the idea of the divine immutability into the incarnation, he was inevitably beset by the difficulty of combining it with our experience. Not only had he to translate it out of the order of eternity into that of time, and represent the Logos as choosing the person of Jesus for his moral dignity ; it was necessary also to save the



divine Word from the mutations of sense. In the incarnation there was no mingling of qualities ; the Logos could not feel hunger, or suffer the pangs of death. Nor could it be enclosed within the body and soul of Jesus. The infinite could not contract itself within a span. The Word must have acted freely everywhere, and joined in union with all souls that opened themselves to his entrance. The life of Christ involved the perpetual tension of his human will to cleave to the indwelling Logos. God condescended to show forth the nature of his being in a man, and a man showed that the human spirit is capable of becoming entirely God's.<sup>1</sup>

Origen died a few years before the Syrian bishops had at the same time condemned the bishop of Antioch and rejected the idea of the *Homo-ousion*. But the impulse which he had given to the higher view of the person of Christ by his doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, harmonized too closely with the general tendency to exaltation not to provide occasions for yet further advance. Early in the fourth century a young scholar named Arius arrived in Alexandria from Antioch, and

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. ii., p. 174.

was appointed presbyter in one of the city parishes. He had been trained in the great Syrian school of Scripture study, and had learned to rely on the methods of grammar and history instead of allegory or tradition. Austere in personal habit, with the eloquence of an orator, and a pastor's devotion to the instruction of the ignorant, he was already well known in the city, when, in the year 318, he ventured to criticize an address delivered by his bishop, Alexander, at a meeting of clergy. All Christendom, he argued, regarded the Son as subordinate to the Father. He was not, therefore, absolutely God ; he was in some sense derived ; he did not possess the same substance as the eternal ; in other words, he was something created, and there was a time when he was not.<sup>1</sup>

Against this doctrine Alexander gathered his forces, and in 321 Arius was deposed and excommunicated. Arius sought for support among his friends further east, and a violent controversy arose. The situation was critical. Constantine had only recently legalized Christianity ; and the Church, emerging from the terror and suffering of persecution, was now threatened with divisions

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Tertullian, *ante*, p. 162.

which might react seriously upon the empire. Edicts imposing silence failed to hush the strife, and the Emperor took the bold step of summoning the whole order of the bishops to a general council at Nicæa,<sup>1</sup> not far from his own residence at Nicomedia. It was a notable assembly. Three hundred and eighteen bishops, with crowds of attendant clergy, made their way to the Bithynian city in answer to the imperial call. They came from Persia and from Spain; the Egyptian and the North African met the Greek and the Goth. Alexander of course was present, and with him was a young presbyter hardly five-and-twenty years of age (Arius was over fifty), on whom he placed great reliance. His name was Athanasius. The Emperor himself opened the proceedings, but delegated the presidency to Bishop Hosius of Cordova who had assisted him in the preparations. Stormy and vehement were the debates as the majority at first accused Arius of innovation. In actual struggle documents were torn to pieces; and one aged bishop inflicted a blow upon a heretic's ear. But at length the forces of dissension began to wear away. Conciliation and compromise were

<sup>1</sup> In Bithynia, Asia Minor.

set to work. It was known that the Emperor expected a definite pronouncement, and that he was not disposed to overlook the insubordination of Arius in challenging the doctrine of his bishop. Little by little the friends of Arius were won over, and when Hosius produced a creed, only two refused to sign it, while two more withheld their signatures from the concluding anathema pronounced on those who held the Arian formulæ 'there was a time when the Son was not,' 'before he was begotten he was not,' and 'he was made out of nothing'<sup>1</sup>

The Nicene Creed was the first authoritative declaration of faith sanctioned by the representatives of the entire Church. It was built upon the terms of primitive Christian confession, one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ. But in describing the second of these two persons it summed up the movement of more than two hundred years of speculation since the Fourth Gospel was composed. Without employing the

<sup>1</sup> Arius had treated 'begotten' as equivalent to 'created'; and contended that as God could not communicate his own essence to a creature, the Son could not possess the same substance as the Father, but was a separate being.

term Word, it adopted and elaborated the Evangelist's conception of the Son of God, adding phrases such as 'true God out of true God,'<sup>1</sup> which far outstrip, if they do not positively contradict, the Gospel language. Here is the culmination of the long struggle with Judaism, with Gnosticism, and with the religions of the Empire. Against the first it vindicated the existence at least of a dual relation within the Godhead, an eternal Father and an eternal Son.<sup>2</sup> Against the second it enforced on the one hand the immediate connexion of these two august persons, and the real human experience of the Son, who became not only flesh but also man, exposed to actual suffering and death. And against the varied cults and philosophies which had fought for supremacy over the Galilean, it emphasized the devotion of the Church to its Founder as the real source of the power by which it had at last

<sup>1</sup> Contrast *John* xvii. 3, 'that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'

<sup>2</sup> The concluding clause of the original creed, 'And in the Holy Spirit,' showed how vague was Church doctrine on the subject, and how indeterminate were the nature and function of the Spirit in the Godhead.



captured the mighty forces of Rome. The spiritual energy by which it had won its way was his gift. 'Be of good courage,' he had said to his disciples, 'I have conquered the world.' The promise (if in another sense) was at last fulfilled. If the Emperor had once stood to those beneath him as their 'Lord and God,' how much more did the religious consciousness of the Church demand for its satisfaction a still higher dignity for 'the Christ, the Son of God.'

From another point of view Christianity was a religion of reconciliation. Jesus had sought to make men feel that they were sons of God. Athanasius, almost in the words of Tertullian in an earlier day, afterwards declared that 'God became man in order that man might become God.' The realization of this was accomplished in the person of Jesus. Athanasius might indeed almost completely ignore the actual story. But Arius with all his historic sense could interpret it no better. For he presented a figure without a human soul, inhabited by the Word which did indeed possess free will, and was in some sense susceptible of a development of moral life, but was nevertheless wholly estranged from our

experience. Jesus was neither man, nor God, but a being midway between the two. The time-measure which Arius applied to demonstrate that there was a period when God was not a father, had no religious value, and only created a chasm between God and the world. The doctrine of which Athanasius was to be the great exponent might involve contradictions even more glaring than those implicit in the Arian scheme. But it contained the precious truth that God reveals himself in man, and the life of religion is a life of spiritual fellowship with him. Vain is it to debate what might have happened, had Arius triumphed at Nicæa. It is enough that the church maintained, even in a single isolated experience, the sublime reality of a union of God with our humanity. It remains for it to throw open to all in the boundless future what it has hitherto believed to be the sole prerogative of Jesus Christ.

#### NOTE

The Biblical argument concerning the person of Jesus has recently been stated with great force by Prof. Denney, in *Jesus and the Gospel*, 3rd ed., 1909. The Rev. C. F. Nolloth has endeavoured

to deal with some aspects of modern criticism in his volume on *The Person of our Lord and Recent Thought*, 1908. A learned Roman Catholic exposition is presented by Prof. Lebreton, *Les Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, Paris, 1910.

A convenient summary of the later process sketched in the latter part of this Lecture, from the point of view of a generation ago, will be found in Réville's *History of the Dogma of the Deity of Jesus Christ*, 1878. All students will be deeply indebted to Harnack's great *History of Dogma*, vols. ii.-iv. (Engl. trans., 1896-98). The Anglican point of view is ably represented by Prof. Ottley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 1902, and Mr. Bethune-Baker, *Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, 1903. Prof. Sanday's volume, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, 1910, selects certain aspects for exposition and discussion, and will be considered in the next lecture. Since these lectures were drafted an excellent translation of the little manual of Prof. J. Weiss, *Christ, the Beginnings of Dogma*, by the Rev. V. D. Davis, has been published.

## IV

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO NATURES

THE Nicene settlement produced a fresh crop of theological problems. The details of the subsequent ecclesiastical warfare show how firmly the general type of doctrine out of which Arianism emerged, had been planted in different quarters of the Church. The Emperor discovered that it was not so easy to impose uniformity of belief. There were friends of Arius in the court, and even in his own family ; and three years later, in 328, he recalled the presbyter from exile, and after another three years demanded his reinstatement at Alexandria. Meanwhile the young Athanasius had been elected to the episcopal chair. With a dauntless courage he maintained his ground in spite of a sentence of deposition passed by the Synod of Tyre in 335.<sup>1</sup> The next year he was

<sup>1</sup> This arose, however, out of another matter.

banished by the Emperor to Treves, and orders were given for the solemn reception of Arius at Constantinople. A grand procession was arranged from the Imperial palace to the Church of the Apostles. But the evening before, Arius suddenly died. Some of his followers suspected treachery and poison. His opponents declared that by a stroke of Providence the Judas of orthodoxy had met his merited fate.

The strife, however, was not allayed. Theology and politics, personal intrigues and local struggles, were hopelessly mingled. There were councils and persecutions, checks and counter-checks. The tendencies out of which Arianism had emerged, could not be suddenly and everywhere repressed. The general forces of rationalism were enlisted on its side. It represented a protest against innovations, and repudiated the growing practices of prayers for the dead, the celibacy of the clergy, the worship of saints, and the extreme austerities of monks. But the conflict which it engendered involved grave dangers to the empire. Was it for this that Christianity had been adopted as the state-religion? From such quarrels the romantic Julian endeavoured to lead men's minds



back to the ancient cults ; but his brief reign sufficed to prove that the forces of the old religions were spent. When the Spanish soldier Theodosius ascended the throne with Gratian and Valentinian II, orthodoxy triumphed. His famous edict, issued in 380, imposed the doctrine of the Trinity upon his subjects as ‘ the religion taught by St. Peter to the Romans.’ The next year, 381, a council at Constantinople re-enacted the creed of Nicæa, expanding the earlier clause concerning the Holy Spirit. But Arianism was still strong enough to hold the Germanic invaders who had received it from the missionaries of the fourth century ; and it was only in the course of generations that Lombard and Goth submitted to the authority of the Catholic Christianity of Rome.

(i)

Meanwhile, the problem of the Incarnation remained unsolved. The fact, affirmed at Nicæa, and reaffirmed at Constantinople, was stated thus : ‘ The only begotten Son of God, being of one substance with the Father, was incarnate and was made man.’ But the mode of this incarnation was undefined. What was the nature of this

humanity ? How was it related to the divine Person who had deigned to unite himself with it ? In what fashion should it be conceived ? Various possibilities were open ; which corresponded with reality ?

The way to a solution was long and difficult ; the questions involved were numerous and intricate. Within the field of organized Christianity the influences at work were manifold. The victory of the Church over the expiring Paganism of the fourth century inevitably promoted the exaltation of the person of Christ. In contrast with the traditional forms of Hellenic or Roman worship, with the cults of the East which had sought to establish themselves in permanent possession of the people's faith, or with the refined philosophical pantheism which still appealed to many cultivated minds, the distinctive element in Christianity lay in a doctrine of salvation for which the life and death of its founder were both needed. In their interpretation the influences of powerful personalities and great schools of teaching naturally played a vigorous part. The modes of thought current at Rome or Antioch, Alexandria or Constantinople, were by no means the same.

Different methods of study, different traditions of approach to the problems of theology, marked the far-sundered branches of the Church. They were increased by diversities of language, as the cultivated Greek speech, the organ of literature and philosophy, was rendered into Syriac in the East, or Latin in the West. And a different metaphysic, Platonist, Aristotelian, Stoic, or Neoplatonist, might shape the issues along varying lines.

But, again, the alliance with the empire effected by Constantine brought fresh factors into play. The Church now stood in close connexion with the State. Legislation was enacted for its benefit. Privileges and immunities were conferred upon it. Whatever tended to weaken its power and disrupt its unity, was full of peril. Heresy might mean more than ecclesiastical division; the lapse of a province from orthodoxy might be much more than a scandal for the bishops, it might lead to defiance of imperial control, and false doctrine might spell dismemberment. The personal opinions of emperors, consequently, gained additional significance. The court, also, guided by the proclivities of the reigning house, and sometimes

peculiarly susceptible to the counsels of a favourite preacher, claimed its share of attention. Moreover, the power to summon a general council of the Church did not lie within its hierarchy. The right of initiative belonged to the Emperor alone.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, once more, the increased importance of the bishops contributed another element of great force. They constituted the teaching body ; and the leadership of parties lay with them. The influence of the great Sees like Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, extended over areas far wider than their local jurisdiction. Their occupants demanded the allegiance of their brethren of Italy, Egypt, or Syria. Large crowds of followers accompanied them to support their views ; and in the East immense bands of monks, roused often to passion by the vicissitudes of controversy, added an element of vehemence—not to say violence—gravely opposed to calm reflexion or temperate debate. Moreover the jealousies of rival ecclesiastics

<sup>1</sup> The twenty-first article of the Church of England still emphasizes this lay authority : ' General councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes.'

led to intrigues for vindicating special claims. Rome and Alexandria might drop their hostility to combine against the assumptions of Constantinople, which not even an emperor's presence could endow with three or four centuries of Christian tradition. But behind all these conflicting factors lay an increasing reverence for the decisions of the great œcumenical councils. Through these the Church spoke with increasing power. Their decrees carried with them an authority far transcending that of the individual bishops which composed them. For the belief grew clearer that they were guarded from error by their heavenly Lord, and that the voice of the episcopate was the guarantee of truth. The successors of the apostles, in defining and interpreting the faith committed to their predecessors, could not fall away from the deposit originally entrusted to the Twelve.

(ii)

Under these general conditions for the formation and settlement of doctrine the great theme of the incarnation was pursued. In what form did it take place, and what were its consequences for



the two discrepant elements, divine and human, the only begotten Son of God and the man Jesus ? 'The Word was made flesh,' said the Gospel. 'True God out of true God . . . was made man,' said the Creed. There was certainly a difference of language ; perhaps there was one of interpretation. Scripture was, of course, the ultimate authority, but there were different ways of handling it. The question might be approached from either side, that of God or man, and it was likely that the answers would show great divergence. The theological method would start from the nature of the Deity, and would ask what would be the *a priori* conditions of such an event ; what kind of union could conceivably take place between a person in the Godhead and a human being on earth for the purpose of salvation ; what would be the resultant type of experience ; how far could the energies and aptitudes of the one be communicated to the other ; to what extent could they feel and think and act together ? On the other hand, the historical method would start from the records of the incarnate Person in the Gospels. It would enquire what the Scriptures related of his actual career. It would note the

hints contained in the brief delineation of his passage from infancy to manhood. It would study the manner of his daily walk and conversation, and endeavour to apprehend the character of his inner life by the evidences of his words and deeds. From the picture thus wrought out of the facts it would infer the nature and relations of the Godhead and the manhood which produced them. An example of each of these methods must suffice to illustrate their tendencies and issues.

Apollinaris, the cultured son of a cultured father, was bishop of Laodicea in the second half of the fourth century. He had been the champion of Christianity against the philosopher and critic Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian. A trained student of metaphysics, at home in the schools of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, he was also familiar with the exegetical learning of the Biblical theologians of Antioch; and with untiring industry had defended the Nicene orthodoxy against the Arians, the Manicheans, and other heretics. The ontological postulate which he brought to the interpretation of the person of Christ was that of the immutability of Deity.

Origen had admitted his possession of a human soul as a middle term between the Logos and the flesh. To Apollinaris this seemed a fatal concession. It introduced into the person of the Incarnate Son a free will exposed to the possibilities of change, and therefore sin. The Athanasian doctrine had demanded that the Redeemer should be lifted above all variations such as rise out of our mortal experience. The conception of freedom implied moral probation ; it involved the idea of a development in the interior life. Such a view savoured of the subordinate position assigned by Arianism to the Son. The divine Word, consubstantial with the Father, could not be liable to vicissitudes of purpose or disposition. It could not, therefore, have been associated with that human intelligence which, in the Platonic psychology, was the seat of ignorance and sinful instinct. The Gospel declared that the Word became flesh, not man. That signified that in clothing himself with the animated form of Jesus, the only begotten Son had taken the place of the human spirit, and wore the earthly body as its visible and temporary robe. Apollinaris pleaded, therefore, for the 'single

nature of the Word made flesh.' He did not shrink from comparing the Man-God of orthodoxy to the fanciful forms of Greek mythology like satyrs and minotaurs. And he affirmed that the 'mingling' of the divine and human attributes was so complete that what belonged to one might be affirmed of the other. The divine Word, accordingly, condescended to be born of Mary, and died upon the cross. It was the last result of the principle of the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. But Apollinaris was condemned by the council of Constantinople, and an imperial decree prohibited his followers from worshipping together.

Apollinaris knew how to find in Scripture what suited his philosophical theology. His younger contemporary, Theodore, reversed his method. Born about 350 A.D. at Antioch, he had studied under John 'of the golden mouth,' and after receiving priest's orders about 383 was appointed to a church at Tarsus. Thence, nine years later, about the time when Apollinaris died, he passed as bishop, to Mopsuestia, some forty miles away. The Scriptural theologians of Antioch started from the traditions of Christ's human life. They

found the Gospels full of indications of a moral experience. The public career of the Messiah was prefaced by a temptation and a victory, and his trials lasted till its close. These could have had no meaning had he not possessed a rational human soul, capable of choice between good and evil. What, then, was the nature of its connexion with the Word? They could not have been one in essence; for the divine Word could not have been changed into a man, or even circumscribed by his bodily frame. Nor was the unity simply one of 'working' or energy, for the Deity is present everywhere, and always operating; his presence in Christ in this character conferred no peculiar privilege. It was a moral union, resembling that of God with his saints in virtue of their harmony with his mind and will. In Jesus the perfection of obedience and piety brought as its sublime result the indwelling of Deity. True, this began with his conception, for God foresaw the course of his development, and in anticipation of his holiness deigned to unite with him from the outset of his life. At each stage of his advance, with each fresh step forwards on the path of good, the union became more



intimate. But there were after all two natures combined within one outward form, two 'hypotheses' or persons, in closest combination of grace so that they might be adored as one. Theodore could not abandon his firm hold of the Gospel picture of the humanity of Christ; he could not allow that God could be born and die.

(iii)

Two tendencies, accordingly, were involved in the language of the Nicene Creed, and they struggled vehemently together. In the year 428 another student from Antioch became archbishop of Constantinople. Pious, eloquent, austere, living an ascetic life in the gay city, he was contemptuously described by his enemies as 'ignorant of theology.' The refusal of one of his clergy, Anastasius, to apply to the Virgin Mary the title 'Mother of God,'<sup>1</sup> brought Nestorius into the field for his support. He could not admit such a union between the two natures that the terms suited to the one could be applied to the other. 'God wrapped in swaddling clothes was a heathen

<sup>1</sup> This was already current about 360, and may be traced still earlier. Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, vol. iv., p. 168, note 2.

fable'; he would not endure to worship a God three months old.

The report of such language was not long in reaching Alexandria, where the bishop's chair was occupied by Cyril. A strange mingling of ambition, unscrupulousness, and devotion, marked his character. On one side he showed a violent and persecuting spirit; he prompted outrages upon the Jews; his clergy were responsible for the murder of Hypatia. But his writings fill an important place in the development of Christological doctrine, for he was profoundly interested in the question of salvation. The Athanasian doctrine had this for its chief end; 'God became man in order that man might become God.' But what kind of man? Not, argued Cyril, a single individual, for in that case the benefit of redemption would have been limited to Jesus. The incarnation of the Son was designed for the redemption of humanity, and the manhood with which the Word was united must, therefore, have been generic or universal. Like Athanasius (and Apollinaris) Cyril laid stress also on the divine immutability, and consequently denied the presence of free will in Christ. Before the union

the two natures were distinct ; but in the union the humanity was transformed. There was but 'one nature of the Word enfleshed.' The substance of the manhood, body and reasonable soul, —all was incorporated in his own person, so that the properties of either nature were mutually blended and completely fused. Out of two natures there thus emerged one Christ. But the divine so completely absorbed the human that Cyril could affirm that even while in the manger Christ filled the whole creation as God. Cyril shrank from none of the contradictions involved in his conception of this oneness. The Logos remained unchangeable, yet it could hunger and pray. God was crucified, God suffered — yet, Cyril was obliged to add almost Docetically, without suffering.

The antagonism between the doctrines of Nestorius and Cyril was aggravated by the stress of ecclesiastical jealousy. To thwart Constantinople Cyril appealed to Cœlestine who then filled the See of Rome. Cœlestine had no objection to play off Alexandria against New Rome. Pre-occupied with the Pelagian controversy, and without really considering the teaching of Nes-

torius, he hastened to condemn him. A Roman synod held in 430 required his recantation, and charged Cyril to carry out the sentence. Nestorius retorted by urging the Emperor to call a general council. It met at Ephesus at Whitsuntide, 431. Before the arrival of the Roman legates or the Syrian bishops, Cyril adroitly seized the presidency, and without waiting for John of Antioch hastened to depose Nestorius, who had, meanwhile, refused to appear. When the Syrian contingent reached Ephesus, they held their council under the direction of the Imperial Commissioner, and in their turn proceeded to depose Cyril. Last of all came the representatives from Rome, pledged to espouse the cause of Alexandria. The adherents of Cyril consented to the reopening of the council so as to exalt the Apostolic See. The acts were read over, and the legates gave their sanction to the sentence against Nestorius. Amid shouts of 'A new Paul, one Cœlestine, one Cyril, one faith!' the conflict of parties came to a close. It was a short-lived triumph. The Emperor deposed both of the protagonists. Nestorius, persecuted and dishonoured, was driven from place to place, and died nine years later in 440.

Cyril, in 433, signed a formula admitting two natures after the Incarnation, which his opponent could have equally accepted, and was reinstated in his old authority. But the followers of Nestorius spread farther and farther through the East, till in 781 they erected a famous stone tablet at Singan in the Chinese Empire<sup>1</sup>; and their descendants are still found in scattered communities in the valley of the Euphrates and on the Western coast of India.

(iv)

The struggle for a definition was by no means over; the unreconciled elements in the Nicene orthodoxy could not be repressed. But from the death of Cyril in 444 the forces which were engaged were rather political than theological. Cyril was followed by Dioscorus, who cherished the same ambition to secure for Alexandria the leadership of the Church of the East. He reverted to the

<sup>1</sup> Under the Emperor Tai-tsung in the seventh century this was a great centre of intellectual activity. An immense library of 200,000 volumes was collected there, and religious discussion was actively pursued. The Nestorian mission is said to have arrived from Persia in 635.



older Athanasian type of doctrine, and revived the formula of Cyril's earlier teaching, 'one nature of God the Word made flesh.' He laboured to secure the deposition of Nestorian bishops, and made it his business to drive out 'the two natures.' In forcing his authority on unwilling churches he made claims to power rivalling those of Rome, and exposed himself to danger from two sides. Leo was ready and watchful in the West. Upon the Bosphorus the Emperor raised his own court-bishop to the dignity of patriarch, equal in rank to the holders of the ancient sees ; but the prestige of imperial favour could not convey the sanctity of antiquity. Relations became more and more strained, and an occasion for dispute was soon at hand.

A venerable archimandrite (or abbot) in Constantinople, Eutyches by name, who had spent thirty of his seventy years of life in quietly ruling his monks, was denounced to the synod in the imperial city for heresy. He stood for the 'one nature' of Cyril, the opposite doctrine to the Nestorianism which he had strenuously combated. Vainly did he appeal to the old formula of Athanasius and Cyril ; vainly did he

protest that he would not go beyond the Scriptures, and found nothing there about 'two natures.' He was condemned as a follower of Apollinaris, and the newly decorated patriarch Flavian proceeded to circulate a decree of excommunication. Eutyches naturally appealed to the Emperor, Theodosius II, and further laid his case before Leo at Rome. He also obtained the support of Dioscorus at Alexandria in his demand for a council, which the Emperor conceded. It met at Ephesus, in August, 449. One hundred and thirty-five bishops were present. The violence of its proceedings under the presidency of Dioscorus gained for it from Leo the contemptuous name of 'the Robber Synod.' The stories of terrorism may have been exaggerated, but Dioscorus was resolved to secure his own supremacy. A letter from Leo had been brought by the representative from Rome, but he was not allowed to read it, though Dioscorus deposited it among the minutes. It was alleged afterwards that with the aid of the civil power Dioscorus had posted armed soldiers to command the approaches of the council chamber, and the proconsul actually appeared at the door with a bundle of chains. The patriarch Flavian

was deposed, and appealed in his turn to the authority of Rome. Barsumas, abbot of a Syrian monastery, had brought his monks to overawe the Fathers. The unfortunate patriarch (so ran the tale), brutally treated, kicked and beaten, was thrown into prison, and died three days later at Hypepe on his way into exile.<sup>1</sup> The bishops were compelled to sign blank documents, and after other opponents of Dioscorus had been also condemned, Eutyches was acquitted and restored. When the legates reported the proceedings at Rome, Leo rejected the Ephesian resolutions, whereupon Dioscorus, in the spring of 450, took the audacious step of excommunicating his hated rival.

Suddenly the knot was cut. On July 28 Theodosius died. His sister Pulcheria, who became empress, quickly gave her hand to the soldier Marcian, and the reversal of the policy of Theodosius began. The imperial support of Dioscorus was withdrawn. The temporary primacy which he had enjoyed fell away. Communications were opened with Rome, and arrange-

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, vol. iv., p. 210, seriously doubts all these charges.

ments were made for another council to undo the work of Ephesus. It met at Chalcedon, nearly opposite to Byzantium,<sup>1</sup> on October 8, 451. The number of bishops attending it was the largest on record; moved by the recent dangers about six hundred assembled. Both politically and ecclesiastically, as Ranke has noted, it was the most important council of all. The presidency was assigned to Leo, who did not attend in person, but was, as before, represented by his legates, the imperial commissioners acting as effective presidents. Leo, however, had sent a lengthy letter conveying his own interpretation of the Nicene creed, insisting upon 'one person in two natures.' It is probable that the majority of the Fathers, especially the bishops of Egypt, Palestine, and Illyria, would have accepted the resolutions of Ephesus in 431, as interpreted by Cyril, 'out of two natures Christ is,' meaning that after the Incarnation the Logos had only one nature which had become flesh.<sup>1</sup> But the pressure of the imperial authority was strong. It was necessary to tranquillize the distracted East. There were

<sup>1</sup> About two miles south of the modern Scutari.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, vol. iv., p. 216.

vehement debates, and dramatic incidents, as one after another of the bishops who had supported Dioscorus two years before alleged that his signature had been extorted from him by force. The Roman representatives secured the condemnation of Dioscorus, who persisted in maintaining that he was the true follower of Athanasius and Cyril, and the way was gradually prepared for Leo's triumph. It seems likely that a formula had been drawn up by a secret commission under imperial orders before the council met. It was based upon Leo's letter, and embodied his views. Introduced at the fifth session, on October 22, it condemned every form of confusion, mixture, or blending, ascribed to Eutyches, and concluded as follows :—

' We, then, following the holy fathers, all with one consent teach men to confess one and the same Son our Lord Jesus Christ : the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in Manhood ; truly God and truly Man ; of a reasonable soul and body ; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood ; in all things like unto us without sin ; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days for us and our salvation born of the virgin Mary the mother of God according to the Manhood ; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in



two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one hypostasis, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ, as the prophets, from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself hath taught us, and the Creed of the holy fathers hath delivered to us.'

Three days later, on October 25, the sixth session was held. Pulcheria and Marcian were present in state. The Emperor delivered an address in favour of unity, and the question was put. Amid loud cries of assent—'We are all orthodox!' 'Long live Marcian, the new Constantine, the new Paul, the new David!' 'Long live Pulcheria, the new Helena!'—the formula was carried. The problem was in fact abandoned. Its contradictions were stated in the plainest terms; each nature continued to exist in its own mode of being; but the fashion in which they were held together by one person remained unexplained.

The story was not ended, for the Greek intellect could not wholly relinquish the attempt. The crude assertion of the Deity and the Humanity in juxtaposition was unacceptable to the subtler

Eastern mind. The sense of the overwhelming superiority of the divine, the incongruousness of its union with what was liable to decay, begot various strange forms of speculation in the next two hundred years traceable ultimately to the conception of one nature after the Incarnation. But in the West about the eighth century a Latin hymn, known by its opening words as *Quicumque vult*, 'the Creed commonly called of Saint Athanasius,' began to make its way, which may possibly be as old as the latter part of the sixth. At any rate its doctrinal type is the Roman view which triumphed at Chalcedon. In the English churches which followed the Sarum rite it was daily sung before the Apostles' creed. The Prayer Book of the present day requires its recitation fourteen times a year. The verses defining the nature of Christ run thus :—

The right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord  
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man :

God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the  
worlds, and man of the substance of his mother, born  
in the world ;

Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human  
flesh subsisting ; equal to the Father as touching his  
Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his  
manhood ;

Who, although he be God and man, yet is he not two, but one Christ ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God :

One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person ; for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

The author of the Creed is unknown ; the one thing certain is that it was not Athanasius, for the true sequel of his Christology would be some form of Monophysitism, or the doctrine of One Nature. Like the formula of Chalcedon, it did not attempt to relieve the metaphysical difficulty, but it clung to the fact of Christ's manhood. Placing the two natures side by side, each in its own perfection, it left the contradiction of their co-existence in one person unresolved, and offered no account of their union. The method and effect of their mutual operation remained undetermined, but whatever else Jesus may have been besides, he was still a man.

(v)

The Church is now confronted once more with the same problem. The Anglican movement in the last century shifted the theological centre of interest from the Evangelical conception of

atonement to the ecclesiastical doctrine of the incarnation. Here was the fundamental idea of Christianity, and the whole of the sacramental institutions of the Church had for their principal object to extend its benefits to the believer. Moreover, with the reaction against different modifications of the Calvinistic type, the student of the New Testament found that behind St. Paul stood Jesus. The spirit of historical enquiry, once roused, was not content till it brought the Gospels within the range of accepted scientific methods, and the long series of lives of Christ, German, French, and English, testifies to the zeal with which this object has been pursued. One single illustration must suffice to show how psychological fidelity has modified dogmatic control. In the article on Jesus Christ contributed by Dr. Thomson (then Archbishop of York) to the Dictionary of the Bible edited by Dr. William Smith in 1863 we read the following account of the Temptation :

‘ It was the trial of one who could not possibly have fallen. This makes a complete conception of the temptation impossible for minds wherein temptation is always associated with the possibility of sin.’

It is obvious that under such circumstances

temptation loses its meaning altogether. Very different is the treatment of the same theme by Prof. Sanday, in the corresponding article in the Dictionary edited by Dr. Hastings (1899) :

‘It is impossible for us to understand it, in the sense of understanding how what we call temptation could affect the Son of God. It could not have touched him at all, unless he had been also, and no less really, Son of Man.’

Various circumstances have combined to bring the question of the relation of the two natures once more to the front place in connexion with the doctrine of the person of Jesus. The critical study of the Old Testament, for example, has gravely modified many traditional views of the authorship of its different books. Moses, it is now known, did not write the Pentateuch, nor David the hundred and tenth Psalm, nor Daniel the book which bears his name. Yet the Gospels attribute such ascriptions to Jesus. How were such erroneous literary judgments to be explained? The enquiry opened wider issues, which were frankly faced by Dr. Gore in his essay on ‘the Consciousness of our Lord,’ published in his volume of *Dissertations on Subjects connected with the Incarnation* (1895).



'Up to the time of his death,' we read (p. 87), 'he lived and taught, he thought and was inspired and was tempted, as true and proper man, under the limitations of consciousness which alone make possible a real human experience. Of this part of our heritage we must not allow ourselves to be robbed by being "wise above that which is written."' The evidence of this lies on the surface of the First Three Gospels. Jesus was taught as the young are taught. There was a real growth in mental apprehension and in spiritual capacity. When we are told that he advanced in wisdom as in stature, it is plain that his intellectual and moral life developed with expanding knowledge and the transition from youth to maturity. He was subjected to temptations such as might beset a man; and he met them by the free exercise of a human will. He asked for information and received it; he could express surprise; his knowledge was limited. On the last night of his life he is seen in Gethsemane to be weighted with an almost crushing burden. The future is not clear to him. He stands before a catastrophe which threatens to destroy all his hopes. It falls upon him, and on the cross he

feels himself really forsaken. In such a being it would seem impossible to suppose that two consciousnesses, divine and human, were going on together.

Such facts could not be wholly ignored by the Fathers who were engaged in working out the issues of the Nicene doctrine. Athanasius, indeed, had been so occupied with the vindication of the presence of Deity in Christ that he paid but scanty attention to his humanity ; but in rejecting the idea that his will was 'mutable,' he undoubtedly intended to differentiate him from other men. The favourite method of accounting for the apparent limitations of his knowledge was based on the doctrine of his 'economic ignorance.' By this was meant that he was ignorant, as man, of what he at the same time knew as God. This singular conception inevitably led to moral confusion. Under its influence 'the process by which God reveals himself in such a way as to be intelligible to man, passes imperceptibly into meaning a process of divine reserve which is in fact deception.'<sup>1</sup> If Jesus affirmed that not even the Son knew the day and the hour of the coming

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 151.

of the Son of Man, he only pretended, said Cyril, not to know. More boldly still the Syrian Ephraim (about 308-373) declared, 'Christ, though he knew the moment of his advent, yet that they might not ask him any more about it, said "I know it not."' Was it surprising that to such pleas Theodoret<sup>1</sup> should indignantly reply, 'If he knew the day, and, wishing to conceal it, said he was ignorant, see what blasphemy is the result of this conclusion, the Truth tells a lie.'<sup>2</sup>

Partial relief from this difficulty has been found in the doctrine known by its Greek name as *kenosis* or 'emptying.' Founded on the well known words of the apostle Paul,<sup>3</sup> it endeavours to conceive the process by which the divine Son divested himself of certain of his powers in passing from the heavenly glory to submit to the conditions of our human state. Among the earliest exponents of this view was Hilary of Poitiers (died 368). He had been a follower of Athanasius,

<sup>1</sup> Born at Antioch towards the end of the Fourth Century ; died soon after the Council of Chalcedon.

<sup>2</sup> Gore, *Dissertations*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>3</sup> *Philippians* ii. 7, see *ante*, p. 127.

and had suffered exile in the Arian struggle. His treatise on the Trinity was afterwards overshadowed by the great work of Augustine, but it was not without influence as the later references of the Schoolmen show, Lanfranc and Peter the Lombard, Aquinas and Bonaventura. All souls, taught Hilary, derive their being from God. The soul of Jesus was created undefiled by the Logos, who fashioned a body to match out of the substance of Mary. In uniting himself with this soul the Logos, with self-renouncing love, relinquished his heavenly glory, and kept back the attributes of his Deity. At every moment he possessed power over himself ; he could allow his physical nature to grow, to hunger, to suffer, and to die, while he held back his own omniscience and omnipotence. The Son of God thus subsisted simultaneously in two spheres, the glory which he possessed before the incarnation, and the humiliation involving the passage from birth to maturity as man. Hilary positively revelled in the antinomies of this dual existence : ‘ God was born in man, but did not cease to be God. He contracted himself to conception, and the manger, and infancy, without declining from the power of

God.’<sup>1</sup> The doctrine had attractions for later theologians, and the professors of Giessen and Tübingen in the seventeenth century actively disputed whether the Son voluntarily laid aside the divine attributes, or whether he continued to possess them but concealed them and held them in reserve. The problem has been approached afresh in our own time by an influential school of Anglican theologians, reinforced by independent voices from other communions. Does the solution which they offer really meet the case ?

## (vi)

That Jesus Christ accepted the current views about the Scriptures of his people, that he shared the ideas of his time about angels and demons which science has discarded, that he foretold the impending close of the existing order, and in no way foresaw the course of history, the growth of the Church, the dangers of government and society, or the immense developments of modern knowledge—is now widely recognized. How are such results to be harmonized with the doctrine that the Second Person of the Godhead was incarnate in him ? It is answered that in be-

<sup>1</sup> Ottley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 385.



coming man the Son relinquished the omniscience which belonged to him in the heavenly life. But what is the relation of knowledge to mind? Can we ever resolve not to know, or discard by any act of will the gains of thought? The father who instructs his children, it is urged, speaks from their point of view, bringing his own attainments to their ignorance, and opening fresh glimpses to their inexperienced minds. The analogy is inexact; for it is not suggested that Jesus assumed his hearer's beliefs knowing them to be erroneous, and intending to correct them; he employs them as his own, and, in one notable case, bases on his power to cast out demons an important argument concerning the actual presence of the Rule of God. Moreover, it must be asked, within what limits is this process confined? If Jesus were in error on the subject of demoniacal possession, he was so seriously mistaken (we are warned) on the whole theme of the powers of good and evil, that he could not be regarded even as a perfect prophet.<sup>1</sup> Some

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Gore in the posthumous publication of the *Thoughts on Religion* of the late J. G. Romanes, p. 181. Cp. Dr. Strong, *Manual of Theology*, 2nd ed., pp. 126-128.

clearer test must be laid down by which to discriminate the words of human ignorance from those of divine truth. The theory that while some heavenly knowledge was abandoned other portions were retained, introduces a division into the consciousness of Jesus which has no analogy in our experience, and makes him speak now in one character and then in another. Nor can any such partition be carried up into the thought of God. To such apprehension of the Infinite Mind as our poor endeavour can attain, it must appear that thinking and being are in him identical. To his view all things are open, all possible relations known. Immensity with its boundless range of creative options is for ever present, and every imaginable issue is discerned. All visions of beauty, all unheard melodies, abide in him ; not only is he cognizant of all conceivable modes of our experience, but in an infinite variety of ways he transcends our world and lives in everlasting activity and joy. We say of one aspect of his being, where our thought touches his, that he *is* Truth. That is his 'substance': he is the begetter and the sum of all ideas. Can we conceive the Word, the sharer of this knowledge, the

partner of this essence, when preparing to be born a Jew, arranging beforehand to forget who wrote the Pentateuch, but to remember Beelzebub? Or, stranger still, in uttermost surrender, not only emptying out the contents of knowledge,<sup>1</sup> but dispossessing himself of the ability to think, and divesting himself of his own self-consciousness? How can the Eternal and the Omnipresent thus cease to be, for when he ceases to know himself thinker and thought exist no more? Yet we are told that the everlasting Word, the Father's agent in making heaven and earth, grew up for thirty years ignorant who he was, till, at his baptism, the Holy Spirit revealed him to himself!<sup>2</sup>

Hardly less difficult is it to apprehend the idea of the Son's relinquishment of his omnipotence. The world, conceived as the manifestation of the divine thought, is continuously maintained by the divine energy. Moment by moment, hour by hour, age by age, the mind and will of God express

<sup>1</sup> The Pauline figure inevitably involves these spatial conceptions. But knowledge, of course, cannot subsist independently without a mind.

<sup>2</sup> Godet in his *Commentary on St. John*, and *The Thinker*, May, 1895, p. 391.

themselves in our universe. One type of Christian theology declares that the Son was even in Jesus 'upholding all things by the word of his power.' How shall we reconcile this with the figure learning obedience through suffering, and bowed in supplication with strong crying and tears? The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews made no attempt to harmonize them. He simply set his pictures side by side. Later theologians were more bold. Proclus, the adversary and successor of Nestorius, replying to the Presbyter Anastasius in the Cathedral of St. Sophia at Constantinople, declared that 'He, the same, was in his Father's bosom and in the Virgin's womb; in his mother's arms and on the wings of the wind, worshipped by angels in heaven, and supping with publicans on earth.'<sup>1</sup> Cyril asserted that even while in the manger he nevertheless filled the whole creation as God. The German divines affirmed that when he hung on the cross he was also ruling in Athens; and by like reasoning it might be argued that from the depths of his desolation—'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'—he was conducting the eclipse which testified to Nature's

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 104.

sympathy with his decease!<sup>1</sup> But the Gospel evidences of the limitations of his power strip such contradictions of all semblance of reality. At Nazareth the hostility of his fellow-townsmen rendered him unable to do any mighty work (*Mark* vi. 5). We are told, accordingly, that the Son in visiting the earth abandoned his physical attributes.<sup>2</sup> He ceased to live the life of Godhead, and discontinued his cosmic functions. Such an act, like that of parting with his omniscience, implies a conscious purpose. It can be no accident, it is the issue of deliberate resolve. But that, again, involves the interpretation of the persons of the Trinity as constituted with separate minds and wills, which brings the doctrine to the verge of tritheism. Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Strong, in his *Manual of Theology*, 2nd ed., 1903, p. 123, writes: 'As Word of God we believe that He created and sustains the world; the world was sustained by the Word no less during the days of the humiliation.' I have heard a modern Roman Catholic preacher, enlarging on the poverty of the family at Nazareth, use these words, 'Think, the Almighty God, Maker of heaven and earth, asked his mother for bread, and she had none.'

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 477. So, also, Prof. Godet.



how can we conceive of an infinite physical energy divesting itself of itself? In this divorce from the thought which directed it, how is it controlled? What regulates it? Boundless force unguided might dissolve instead of sustaining the world. What prescribes its course, guards it from aberration, conducts it to its end? And how is it resumed when the Son has regained the knowledge he discarded? Will it come back when it is wanted, and by what means is the Son reinstated in its possession? Is it surprising that one distinguished advocate of this hypothesis should prefer not to enquire into the cosmic functions of the Son during the Incarnation,<sup>1</sup> while another should frankly admit that the metaphysical difficulties involved in his accepting even the limitations of human knowledge are insuperable?<sup>2</sup>

Once more, the incarnate life of the Son presents a moral problem of no little difficulty on the basis of the Synoptic tradition. The pictures of the temptation which follow the descent of the Spirit are not reproduced by the Fourth Gospel. The

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, 1891, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Ottley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 623.

transcendent Son was elevated above all such trials as followed him to the last night of his life (*Luke* xxii. 28). No conflict of wills was possible for him who *always* did what pleased the Father (*John* viii. 29), and the agony of Gethsemane is replaced by a majestic calm. The Messianic king, divinely endowed with the spirit of wisdom and might, of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, would be lifted, according to Jewish expectation, above sin.<sup>1</sup> To avoid the faintest suspicion of contamination through bodily desire, the apostle Paul would only concede that God had sent his Son 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (*Rom.* viii. 3). Over against the Gospel testimony—'Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, that is God' (*Mark* x. 18<sup>2</sup>)—stands the Greek idea of the immutableness of the ultimate Being. God, by his essential nature, can be exposed to no vicissitude. The alternations of our human ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms of Solomon* xvii. 41. The Buddha, in the same way, was morally perfect. But this sinlessness was not due to the presence within him of a celestial power, it was the fruit of the attainment of perfect knowledge after age-long devotion.

<sup>2</sup> On the alteration of this text in *Matt.* xix. 16, see *The First Three Gospels*, 4th ed., 1909, p. 310.

perience affect him not. His substance must for ever remain unchanged, and his holiness no thought of evil can ever cloud. How, then, should the variations of hunger and thirst, the small conflicts of appetite, the trials of weariness and disappointment, the impulses of anger or ambition, affect the heavenly Word? The theory of Irenæus has been recently revived with the suggestion that the Word was in some manner 'quiescent' during the temptation,<sup>1</sup> and held itself in mysterious reserve during the awful hours of crucifixion and death. But the temptation was no solitary incident, it was a permanent condition, of the ministry of Jesus. Did the Word, then, 'rest' during his whole career? And a still further limitation is imposed upon the Word by the necessity of laying aside those attributes which would have hindered a real human development. For this it was requisite that the manhood should have unimpeded scope. Only in a realm of freedom could temptation have any meaning. To accomplish the purpose of redemption it was indispensable that the humanity with which the Son was associated should be without sin. But in

<sup>1</sup> Ottley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 610.

ts union in one person with the divine Word how could it possess any liberty to err ? Anointed with the Holy Spirit how should it even be liable to temptation ? What dark thoughts could cloud that radiant endowment ? Could the need of food, or the wish for rest, ever interfere with its holy activity in doing good ? How should the gratification of any innocent affection—the sweetness of friendship at Bethany, for instance—ever tempt such a being into an enjoyment contrary in time or occasion to the heavenly will ? To preserve the reality of temptation he was actually solicited to evade the law of consecrated obedience ; but a countervailing force enabled him to master the trial. He was, we are assured, undoubtedly free, and yet the issue was predetermined, for the victory was inevitable. The beams of Deity were restrained ; the All-holy kept its righteousness in reserve ; but it was still there with a silent though unescapable control. The manhood, after all, could not will to sin,<sup>1</sup> it was kept from swerving by the might of the Word. Surely the moral difficulties are no less serious than the metaphysical.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Dr. Strong, *Manual of Theology*, p. 124, ' Our Lord, even though really tempted, was incapable of sin.'

Nor are they lightened by association with the doctrine of Cyril which, we are assured, the Church has ever taught, namely, that the humanity of Jesus was impersonal,<sup>1</sup> a nature not individual but generic. Had it been that of a single person, it is affirmed, the benefits of the redemption effected by its union with the Word would have been limited to the man of Nazareth. That the great saving act wrought by the Incarnation might be extended to all, it was necessary that the manhood should not be limited to a single being, but be really universal. It is true that in the Gospels Jesus is displayed as a particular person. He was subject to the ordinary laws of nurture and

<sup>1</sup> Ottley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 602 ; Strong, *Manual of Theology*, p. 130. I know not if I rightly understand the meaning of Hooker (*Eccl. Polity*, Book V., ch. lii. 3) ; ' The Son of God did not assume a man's person unto his own, but a man's nature to his own Person. . . . His making and taking to himself our flesh was but one act, so that in Christ there is no personal subsistence but one, and that from everlasting. By taking only the nature of man, he still continueth one person, and changeth but the manner of his subsisting, which was before in the mere glory of the Son of God, and is now in the habit of our flesh.' This looks at first sight like Apollinarianism ; but in §4 we hear that Christ not only had a human body, but also a human soul.



growth, though his body, we are informed (not by the Evangelists), was incapable of defect or disease. He felt real sensations, like hunger and pain ; he thought real thoughts ; he willed real acts ; he possessed all the elements of manhood, body, life, mind ; there was nothing outwardly to distinguish him from those who shared his daily intimacy, like Peter, James, and John ; and yet we are assured his manhood was an abstraction ; the Incarnation took place in Humanity, not in a personal human being ; in Man, not in a man. Had Jesus been an individual like one of ourselves, his ascension would have taken a fourth person into the Godhead, and converted the Trias into a Tetras.<sup>1</sup> But how can we present to ourselves a generic manhood in a specific form, unlimited by personal consciousness ? The universal characteristics of the race, divested of an animating personality, are a pure abstraction of the mind. For us they exist only in thought, and are seen only in the particular. They cannot be localized by themselves in any place, or born in any time.

<sup>1</sup> I have heard an Anglican preacher describe the ascended Christ as sitting with his physical body, head, hands, feet, in the middle of the Trinity !

It is confessed that Jesus manifested self-consciousness, intelligence, emotion, resolve, through a real mouth, and actual eyes, and visible hands. This is, however, exactly what we denote by personality. Precisely in these manifestations lie our means of distinguishing one man from another. To say that the teacher on the mount possessed only the elements of humanity common also to the Chinaman and the Hottentot, the generalized sum of what belongs to all members of the race, without identification with any special individuality, is to make havoc of history and philosophy. Only the direst theological necessity can point to such an issue. A humanity comprising the whole race, unconfined by a person, yet occupying one physical frame, with a pedigree behind it and a cross in front, is beyond our power to conceive. Does not the difficulty prove the need of revising the whole scheme of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption ?

(vii)

The conceptions thus briefly discussed are all concerned with the metaphysical aspects of the Incarnation, and are involved in various difficulties arising out of the idea that the divine sub-

stance, infinite and eternal, omniscient and omnipotent, can voluntarily divest itself of its own properties. A few words may finally be said concerning another suggestion recently offered by Prof. Sanday, to meet the advocates of what he designates 'reduced Christology.'<sup>1</sup> It leaves on one side all ontological perplexities, and bravely starts from the present theories of psychology. On the one hand, in accordance with the Gospel testimony Prof. Sanday writes (p. 167) : ' The life of our Lord, so far as it was visible, was a strictly human life ; He was, as the Creeds teach, " very man " ; there is nothing to prevent us from speaking of this human life of His just as we should speak of the life of one of ourselves.' ' But, on the other hand,' it is added, ' we no less emphatically refuse to rule out or ignore or explain away the evidence which the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament afford that this human life was, in its deepest roots, directly continuous with the life of God Himself.' The problem is how to conceive and express this in modern terms. Without laying any stress on the doctrine of the Homœousion in its Greek form, Prof. Sanday

<sup>1</sup> *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, 1910, lecture V.

boldly invokes the current notion of the sub-conscious self.

That many processes of thought and feeling take place below the surface of our conscious life has long been recognized.<sup>1</sup> But it was only a quarter of a century ago (in the chronology of the late Prof. William James) that a real step forward was made by the discovery that in some persons at least beside the ordinary modes of our experience there may be forms of mental activity in memory or reasoning or emotion which proceed without their knowledge, and only show themselves in their results. The field of their conscious self does not, in other words, cover their whole life. Just as at either end of the spectrum there are waves of light which our senses do not enable us to translate into colour, so on the borders of the inner history we know from hour to hour there lie tracts of activity which we do not habitually discern. The inquirer into these obscure processes is always in danger of being

<sup>1</sup> I may be permitted to recall the fact that my father, Dr. W. B. Carpenter, drew attention to them from the physiological side under the term 'unconscious cerebration,' as early as about 1853.

misled by his own metaphors. He is obliged to describe in terms of space what really has no extension whatsoever. We commonly speak of thoughts as *in* our minds ; but minds take up no room, they have no dimensions, and it is only for convenience that the language of inclusion or figure is employed. The special term which has become established in recent usage, is founded on the image of the threshold (Latin *limen*) of a room or house. There is 'a level above which sensation or thought must rise before it can enter into our conscious life.'<sup>1</sup> The activities that engage our attention, which we watch, direct, and control, all proceed above this level ; they have crossed the threshold ; they are described, therefore, as supra-liminal. But beneath them, it is now realized, is an obscure scene where sensations, thoughts, and emotions, continually act and react, without definitely entering into the upper field within our view. These are all sub-liminal ; they lie below the threshold ; and from time to time through some access of energy one or another makes its way above, and some idea, suggestion, fancy, purpose, passion, arises into full conscious-

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Myers, *Human Personality*, p. 14.



ness in our mind. It is in this region that modern investigation seeks for the explanation of a wide range of our inner life. Much of what happens to us day by day, much of what we ourselves think, feel, say, do, seems to leave no trace in our actual memory. But it is registered in the sub-conscious sphere. There it contributes to the formation of character, to the enrichment or the corruption of our interior strength. For this is the real seat of habit ; here are stored up the results of our experience ; on this field conflicts of instinct are fought out, of which we often know only the results, in the shape of impulses or propensities which surge up unexpectedly into the midst of the region of our control. Deep down within us are these diverse elements of character, which are sometimes capable of being separated in groups so as to constitute what seem distinct personalities within one physical being, with separate aptitudes and dispositions, tastes, humours, capacities, and memories. Here also, it is suggested, are those energies which in heightened form transcend the normal exercise of our thought ; those flashes of insight into intellectual and moral truth which open to the inner eye visions of reality that

our ordinary intelligence could not reach ; that power of artistic creation which is no process of mechanical structure or even of rational development, but the unsought uprising of a great idea to which eye and hand may only be able to give imperfect shape, or language inadequate expression. This is the spontaneous activity of genius, in which many races have dimly seen the presence and action of some higher power. And here it is, suggests Prof. Sanday, that we may see the proper seat of all divine indwelling, or action on the human soul, and, in particular, the place of the Deity of the incarnate Christ.

That one side of our nature is open to the deeps of Being, some of us learned long ago from Emerson. Prof. Sanday prefers the more guarded statement of Wordsworth, 'We feel that we are greater than we know.' The curious figure which he devises to present his thoughts to us pictorially, takes the shape of a narrow-necked vessel, across the orifice of which a porous web of consciousness is stretched. Much of what comes up from below can get through ; but some of the contents never pass the little barrier. At the lower end, however, there is an opening unstopped, unconfined ; and

through this 'there are incomings and outgoings, which stretch away into infinity, and in fact proceed from, and are, God Himself.' In such a personality it is plain that there are not two simultaneous consciousnesses proceeding together, one of which encompasses the other. Nor is the divine depicted as in any way controlling or ruling the human so as to deprive it of its natural freedom. The higher acts upon the lower by way of suggestion; it must be conceived as stimulating the energies in the midst of which it works; it quickens some thoughts and feelings into a livelier activity; it begets others which had had no existence at all before. How far this energy of God differs from what may be called the action of the Spirit, in what respect it constituted in Christ a unique manifestation of the Deity, it is not easy to infer. The figure might be applied to various types of prophet, seer, or saint; and as an interpretation of the divine element in the person of Christ in terms applicable in various degrees to other forms of human experience we might welcome it with sincere goodwill. The mystics of many ages and of various lands might here meet on common ground.

But the divine is not the only element in the sub-liminal self. This dim-lit region is the home of all kinds of experiences which have left no visible trace upon the conscious life. Here they build up unseen connexions, which mould and shape the hidden forces of character; here instincts long driven out of the higher nature still live a suppressed life; here old habits yet clog the powers of clearer resolve. Many of these elements have no moral character. Some are mere survivals of mechanical processes which have long since passed into automatic action. Others are the unconsidered trifles, the flotsam and jetsam deposited by little eddies out of the course of the main stream. And yet again others belong to dark and sinister groups, which, coming together we know not how, produce those sudden intrusions of evil thought, of unholy temper, which sometimes disturb even lofty minds. Who that has striven to control the uprising of passion, or master the impulse of fear, or conquer the suggestions of malice, does not look back even with horror at the secret depths of his own nature, where a riot of evil can take place without his knowledge! The difficulty is not unfelt by Prof. Sanday, who

has recognized that the unconscious is not only the seat of the divine, it is that of the diabolical as well (p. 163).

Moreover, of the functions of the Son in the maintenance of the world this theory gives no account. That uniform and steadfast action which the order of the universe implies, can hardly be realized through the obscure, and, it must be added, often fitful activities of the sub-conscious self. In that life which is so frankly likened to our own no place is left for the infinite energy required to uphold the fabric of heaven and earth. It is, however, apparently in his consciousness as Messiah that the proof of his Deity really culminates: 'the title Messiah included the functions of the Judge—the Judge of all mankind. And we cannot doubt that our Lord thought of Himself as destined to hold this great assize.' But if the descriptions of the judgment by the Son of Man attributed to Jesus in the Gospels are to be put to this use, it must not be forgotten that they contain an element of time which was never fulfilled. The event which was to happen in the life-time of that generation would undoubtedly have conclusively established the claims



based upon it, had it taken place. But with every century that has since elapsed, its probative value has declined ; and now that this great expectation has passed out of our world-view, the Messianic character no longer expresses what Jesus really stands for in history, and the lofty pretensions which Christendom has associated with it will slowly be dissolved and fade away.

But through the strife of creeds, the conflicts of philosophies, the struggles of parties, and the rivalries of ecclesiastics, we may still discern in the story of Christian dogma an ideal side. It is the record of an attempt—often marred by bigotry and frustrated by misunderstanding—to grapple with a mighty truth. The revelation of God *to* man can only take place *in* and *through* man. If he has learned to trace the orbit of the planets, and think God's thoughts after him, it is because the Father of our spirits has made our minds kindred with his own, and has wrought such reason in us as shall match the reason he has wrought into the world. We could not win an answer from Nature to the simplest of our questions, were there not a community of intelligence

between us. But while her order is the eternal condition of all our morality, the relations of spirit between souls open to us new visions of character beyond the scope of sun and star. In our self-conscious life only does the highest vision of the Infinite break upon our view. If God is to show himself possessed of what we call goodness, if he is the creator and guide of our experience, if he is training us by the slow steps of an age-long ascent for the high destiny of fellowship with himself, such self-disclosure must take place for us through our humanity. Our own nature must become in some way at once the witness and the manifestation of the Unseen. Accordingly in the holiest human souls we see with greater clearness that which we dimly apprehend even within our own. Above the sins and follies of our mortal days we discern the growth of loftier ideals. They are revealed to us first by the nobler being of those among whom we live. These have in their turn learned from prophet and saint and hero, through whom they looked as through a window into whole worlds of beauty, grace, and light, and they reflect the vision on to our hearts. Paul saw this divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ ; and many a

lowly disciple, doubtless, as he listened to the unwearied preacher of God's love for man, saw the same glory shining in Paul's face. God, said the apostle, was reconciling the world in Christ unto himself. Was not the work extended in the ambassador who pleaded his Lord's cause, in martyr and confessor, and in the humble and lowly of heart who have all added their contribution to the great process? For wherever thought and life are spent in loving service for the simplest ends of human good, there the ministry of Jesus is continued. And to apply that truth in the home and the school, in the factory and the shop, in the hospital and the mission, in the exchanges of trade, in the councils of the city and the state—this is the age-long duty of the Church.

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